ACROSS / A14
Irregularities attended Asean Cebu projects–COA

BUSINESS / B1
More petroleum price hikes coming; average increase seen at P3-P3.50 per liter

NEWS / A2
Senate may reopen probe of NorthRail

NEWS / A13
Aussie firm plan to fertilize Sulu Sea opposed

LIFESTYLE / C1
Nutrition campaign gets rolling literally

'Bad vibes' force Neri to vacate CHEd office

By Jerry E. Esplanada

BAD VIBES

Believe it or not, this was why Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Chair Romulo Neri vacated his office and transferred to a

SEE PAGE A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, November 13, 2007 ★★ Vol. 22 / No. 238 www.inquirer.net

Police release sketch of poll official's killer

By Tina G. Santos and Allison W. Lopez

WITNESSES HAVE PROVIDED POLICE WITH a description of the possible assassin in the killing of election official Abraham Bulag as Manila mayor Alfredo Lim ordered a clampdown on the progress of the investigation.

Releasing an artist's sketch of the presumed killer yesterday, Manila Police Dist.-

SEE PAGE A3

GMA solons go for the kill

House OKs impeach case–but only in form

By Norman Bordadora

THE HOUSE COMMITTEE on justice, moving swiftly after the minority walked out and called the proceedings a "sham," yesterday declared an impeachment complaint filed against President Macapagal-Arroyo to be sufficient in form.

At the same time, however, the pro-Arroyo House majority poured itself to throw out the complaint for lack of substance.

Deputy Minority Leader Rolex Golez of Pandacan led the walkout on the first day of the committee hearing on the three impeachment complaints filed by opposition lawmakers against Mrs Arroyo, filed by former rival Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino (PMP) Chairman Joseph Estrada and Fernando Poe Jr.'s followers filed another one yesterday.

"It's a sham complaint," said Golez, pointing out that without the Senate document as an addendum to the Pulido complaint, the impeachment case would not prosper.

"The majority unanimously voted to

SEE PAGE A4

LIBERTAS Rod Pulido appears to be deep in thought as opposition spokesperson Adel Tamano stresses a point during Monday's House justice committee hearing on the impeachment complaint filed against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Left files new case against President

By Norman Bordadora

LAWYERS OF THE ONE YEAR PRESidency against filing another impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo, leftist groups and Fernando Poe Jr.'s followers filed another one yesterday.

Mr. Arroyo's alleged past sins—from unpaid taxes and killings of leftist militants and election fraud in 2004 as shown by the "Hello Garci" tapes—again came to the fore this time with claims that the President herself was involved in the controversial ZTE broadband deal and the Oct. 31 Fabon payoffs.

"The one year bar is not stated in stone," Carol Araullo, chair of Bayan (Bayanang Makabayan, said in an interview. "We can question it before the Supreme Court."

Bayan and the human rights group Karapatan hammered the leftist organizations that filed the impeach moves complaint yesterday. Also with them in filing the 133 page complaint was the National Council of Concerned Volunteers (NCCV), an organization of five supporters.

"This is a last case. It's just an opinion of many," said NCCV leader Ver Gomez.

Malacañang dismissed the new complaint.

"There is no sense being prosecuted with every political noise by those who can't wait until 2010," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

Bayan and Karapatan's concern center mainly on the alleged government policy that led to the extrajudicial killings of activists. The NCCV

LEFT PAGE A4

Lacson says cash gifts taken from police funds

By Cliff C. Cabucungan Jr. and Tonyza Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

THE CASH GIFTS GIVEN TO CONgressmen and governors in Malacañang after separate meetings with President Macapagal-Arroyo on Dec. 11 may have come from the special funds of the Philippine National Police, opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson said yesterday.

Citing police insiders, Lacson said the "real source of the Christmas money" for the lawmakers and Governors Response Task Force (P100 million) and the Police Security and Protection Office (P50 million).

On Wednesday, the Senate blue ribbon committee will start its investigation of the money distributed to legislators and local officials. The issue became the basis for one of two supplemental impeachment complaints to substantiate the one that lawyer Roel Pulido had filed against the President.

Only Davao City Rep. Ed Panlilio has confirmed his attendance in the Senate hearing on Tuesday, according to Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, committee chair.

Panlilio had earlier said he received a paper bag containing P500,000 from his chief of staff, which was handed over to the latter by Bulacan Gov. Joselito Mendoza as they walked out of the Palace on Dec. 11. Hours before that, Mendoza

LACSON DAYS 10

Fight fat and global warming: Walk

PARIS (REUTERS)—OBESITY AND obesity epidemic and global warming might not seem to have much in common. But public health experts suggest people can attack both by walking calories and carbon dioxide at the same time.

How? Get out of your car and walk or bike half an hour a day instead of driving. And while you're at it, eat less red meat. That's how Americans can simultaneously save the planet and their health, according to doctors and climate scientists.

The payoffs are huge, although unlikely to happen.

One numbers-crunching scientist calculates that if all Americans between 30 and 74 walked just half an hour a day instead of drove, they would cut the annual US emissions of carbon dioxide, the chief greenhouse gas, by 64 million tons. About 6.3 billion gallons of gasoline would be saved. And Americans would also shed more than 3 billion pounds overall.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is considering public promotion of the "co-benefits" of fighting global warming and obesity-related illnesses through everyday exercise, like walking to school or work, said Dr. Howard Frumkin, director of the CDC's National Center for Environmental Health.

"A simple intervention like

FIGHT FAT 2-1

HEALTH Secretary Francisco Duque blows his horn, leading the call for comedians to rise out with snorts in horns during Christmas and New Year's Eve celebrations. The "Toss Populeh" campaign was launched yesterday at the Ateneo High School in Teodo, Manila.

EARTH BEAUTIES JESSICA Nicole Trinh of Canada, second from left, was proclaimed Miss Earth 2007 during Sunday's coronation at the UP Theater in Diliman, Quezon City. Completing her court are, from left, Miss Earth-Water Silvana Sinchenko Arteaga of Venezuela, Miss Earth-Air Pooja Chitgopekar of India and Miss Earth-Fire Angela Gomez of Spain.

Okinawans show way to long life

By Tess R. Salazar

THE AVERAGE FILIPINO HAS A life expectancy of 75 years. For the 748 or so centenarians in Okinawa prefecture in Japan, that's just too short.

Okinawa, which has a population of about 1.4 million, has the highest density of centenarians anywhere in the world. There are 38 centenarians for every 100,000 residents in Okinawa, according to September 2007 figures.

Dr. David Sobrato, chair of the Okinawa Gerontology Institute (OGI), who was in the country recently for an international conference on longevity, says Filipinos could live well

OKINAWANS 10-1

Get set to welcome New Year with a toot

By Beverly T. Mendoza

THE TIME MAY BE COMING when Filipinos will have to welcome the New Year not with a bang but with only the use of trumpets and horns.

The Department of Health (DOH) yesterday said it would push for the gradual phaseout of the Filipinos' practice of exploding firecrackers during festivities to welcome the New Year.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III told reporters at the launch of the department's "Toss Paputok" campaign that he would propose such a gradual phaseout before a total ban would be put in place, hopefully by the year 2010.

"That's the ideal target," he said.

Duque said that as a purely public health issue, the DOH preferred a complete ban on firecrackers to keep people from danger.

"From a public health perspective, there is no such thing as a safe firecracker," said Duque.

But he admitted the DOH

GET SET 2-1

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Senate may reopen NorthRail probe

More solons intrigued by De Venecia role in grant of deal to China

WHAT'S INSIDE

TEACHERS get P1,000 more for poll duty /A5

'BORACAY mansion' found to have 2 titles /A9

ATIENZA TAKES back call to abolish LLDA /A7

By Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Tonette Orejas, Inquirer General Intern

THE SENATE MAY REopen its probe of the $550 million North Luzon Railways Project (NorthRail) to determine Speaker Jose de Venecia's alleged role in sealing the contract with the Chinese government.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said it separates the inquiry into NorthRail should "definitely be reopened" following information revealed during the inquiry into the National Broadband Network (NBN) deal, another China-financed project, that De Venecia had apparently lobbied for the Cabacungan Malolos rail line.

"In the first place, [the NorthRail probe] has not been terminated. Apparently the evidence received in the last session of Congress was that he [De Venecia] might have expressed illicit interest in that contract," Santiago said.

De Venecia's name was dragged into the NBN probe after documents showed his office had endorsed the proposal of Amsterdam Holdings Inc. to build the NBN. Amsterdam is owned by his son, Jose "Joey" de Venecia III.

Still, upon instruction of the office of the Speaker, had submitted a draft letter of recommendation to Transportation and Communications Secretary Leandro Mendoza, dated April 26, 2005 (a day before Northr

Saguisag weaned off respirator

A DAY AFTER HE WAS FINALLY told of his wife's death, former Sen. Rene Saguisag's condition continued to improve and his doctors began to wean him off the respirator that had helped him breathe.

The spike in his blood pressure on Sunday morning after he learned his wife Dulce had died in the car accident they were involved in did not have an adverse effect on his overall condition, said Dr. Eric Nelida, head of Makati Medical Center's patient relations office.

"I saw attorney Saguisag this morning and he was very calm. He looked very composed," Nelida told reporters after he assured the first of two medical bulletins for the day.

He said the "weaning process from the ventilator" had started, in which doctors were to begin removing the tubes attached to a respirator.

Saguisag suffered severe head and chest injuries, resulting seven ribs on his left side, in the early Thursday morning accident at Diamcha Highway and Arnaiz Avenue in Makati City where a dump truck slammed into the Saguisags' van.

Dulce Saguisag, 63, died at the scene while the family driver, Philip Cabrales, and dance instructor Rhea Oliveng were injured. Cabrales was severely hurt and remains confined in the intensive care unit next to Saguisag. AP/TJP

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ESCALATING COSTS: A CRISIS FOR MANY FILIPINOS. A TEST FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE.

Shortages in essential goods, together with rising prices of fuel, energy, transport and basic commodities have a tremendous impact on most Filipinos, especially the poor. Higher prices reduce one's purchasing power, take home pay, and impoverish many.

EVERYONE THUS MUST BUCKLE DOWN TO WORK. A CRISIS IS LOOMING. CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

FUEL COST WILL CONTINUE TO RISE

Oil is pushing in the range of $ 95 to $ 100 per barrel. The reason is both a demand and a supply problem. Demand keeps rising due to increasing requirements of high-growth countries like China and India and the onset of the winter season.

Oil will remain the main source of fuel and energy in this century. Even as supply is tightening. The major oil-producing countries like Iran, Iraq and Nigeria have had problems. Globally, there is a serious shortage of refining capacity. Most refinery facilities are old and outmoded. A new refinery takes at least three years to complete.

WE URGE FULL COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 14d OF THE OIL DEREGULATION LAW.

COPW has always supported the Oil Deregulation Law because it provides safeguards against undue and unreasonable oil price increases at the expense of consumers.

Section 14d of the Law requires that any increase or decrease in the price of oil must first be submitted to the Task Force of the Dept. of Energy and the Dept. of Justice for approval. We do not see that this is being done.

COPW appeals to President Arroyo to ensure the strict compliance with Section 14d so that there is full transparency when price hike petitions are made.

GOVERNMENT MUST SHOW POLITICAL WILL TO MITIGATE INCREASE IN FARES AND TRANSPORT COSTS.

COPW has requested the transport sector NOT to push through with a transport strike as this will hurt the riding public.

In return, LTFRB Chairman Thompson Lantion must make good on his pledge made last Nov. 9 that **colorum** and **kotong** practices will be eradicated before the Christmas season.

Also, COPW will work closely with PETRON to designate a number of gas stations in Metro Manila for the exclusive use of the public transport sector where they can avail of fuel at wholesale prices.

POWER RATES WILL CONTINUE TO RISE.

Meralco says it will reduce residential power rates by 34 centavos per kwh beginning this November. That's the good news.

The bad news is that Meralco has a pending rate increase of P 9.20 per kwh representing its under-recoveries from September 2006 to July 2007, a lag of 14 months. The Energy Regulatory Commission has yet to act on this rate increase.

Because a P 9.20 per kwh rate increase is big, COPW is requesting Meralco to stagger this increase over a 12-month period.

PRICES OF PRIME COMMODITIES ARE RISING.

The cost of raw material inputs of agricultural products have increased. As we approach the Christmas season, this means higher prices for rice, sugar, eggs, dressed chicken, meat, bread, noodles, pastries and cooking oil.

The large subsidies granted by the U.S., Europe, and South American countries to their farmers planting corn, wheat, coconut and palm oil for conversion to ethanol to displace petroleum-based fuel have tripled the prices of agricultural products in less than two years.

At the same time, the worst drought in 100 years has hit Australia and New Zealand, among the biggest exporters of wheat. This is why wheat prices are up.

GOVERNMENT MUST ENSURE THAT BASIC FOOD PRODUCTS ARE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE POOR AT SUBSIDIZED PRICES.

A RATIONING PROGRAM to be implemented with the participation of religious groups, civil society, NGOs and the business sector will help the poor cope with price increases. Today the poor spend 55% of their income on food.

COPW will propose that the private sector and the Dept. of Social Welfare create a working group to implement and audit this rationing program. To maximize its benefits and to reach out to more poor people, accurate identification of beneficiaries and the use of control mechanisms such as ATM - type cards with magnetic strips can be considered.

For online posting of COPW issues, log on to http://groups.yahoo.com/group/COPW/

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Tutors to get P1,000 more

PUBLIC SCHOOL teachers who served in the May 14 elections and Sangguniang Kabataan elected officials will get an additional election allowance of P1,000.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said she had ordered Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. to release funds for the additional pay bringing to P2,500 the amount the teachers would get for the polls duty.

A maximum of P1,500 per teacher for honorary election duty was authorized in the 2007 national budget.

Mr. Arroyo said presidential prerogative allowed her to override the ceiling and that funds would be sourced from savings "made possible by the prudent utilization of our fiscal position."

The President also said she had directed the budget and education departments to coordinate with the Commission on Elections "so that indemnities, allowances and delays are avoided" in the release of the funds.

Christine D. Avenido

Malacanang Cash Gift Payola • ZTE Broadband • Extrajudicial Killings • Basilan Beheading • Bedol 2007 Electoral Fraud Road Users Tax used as Campaign Funds • Mike Arroyo Gorman Accounts • EO 464 • Lozano and Pulido Sham Impeachments Con-Ass • Hello Garci 2004 Electoral Fraud • Vidal Doble Family Kidnapping • Comelec Automated Counting Machines North Rail • Jocjoc Bolante Fertilizer • Norberto Gonzales Venable • NAIA-3 PIATCO • Macapagal Boulevard Overpricing Juetengate • Jose Pidal Unexplained Wealth • Mavi Perez IMPSA Bribery • and many more.

Fellow Citizens, this corrupt government must go.

Gloria-Noli RESIGN!

MANIFESTO CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE RESIGNATION OF GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO AND NOLI DE CASTRO AND FOR THE HOLDING OF SPECIAL ("SNAP") ELECTIONS WITHIN 60 DAYS

WHEREAS, because of the numerous unresolved scandals involving the present administration, including but not limited to the 'Hello Garci' Election controversy, the ZTE , North Rail Project, Diosdado Macapagal Highway scandals, the Juc-juc Bolante Fertilizer scam, Jose Pidal caper, hundreds of unresolved extra-judicial killings and the latest Malacañang Bribery Incident, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has completely lost her moral authority to govern this country;

WHEREAS, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has lost public sympathy and support in the light of her tainted electoral mandate and her responsibility for the numerous controversies hounding her administration, as consistently shown by survey after survey conducted by reputable polling entities;

WHEREAS, Noli De Castro is a member of the Arroyo cabinet and is a beneficiary of the cheating perpetrated during the May 2004 Elections and is also considered to be a silent partner in crime of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo not only because of his close personal association and unflinching support for Arroyo but also because of his failure to stand-up against and denounce the abuses and excesses of the Arroyo regime;

WHEREAS, the sham impeachment case filed by personalities connected with Malacanang effectively sabotages and ridicules the impeachment process;

WHEREAS, the only peaceful, legal and constitutional option available to the Nation under the circumstances and to prevent the situation from developing into a full-scale conflict or civil strife is for GMA and Noli De Castro to resign from their respective positions as President and Vice-President, of the Republic of the Philippines;

WHEREAS, the **1987 Constitution**, under ***Section 10, Article VII***, expressly provides that:

> "Sec. 10. *The Congress shall, at ten o'clock in the morning of the third day after the vacancy in the offices of the President and Vice-President occurs, convene in accordance with its rules without need of a call and within seven days enact a law calling for a special election to elect a President and a Vice-President to be held not earlier than forty-five days nor later than sixty days from the time of such call. Xxx*."

NOW, **WHEREFORE**, We the undersigned citizens, taxpayers and voters of the Republic of the Philippines, in our capacity as the true sovereign of the Nation, ***DO HEREBY:***

1. Call upon Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Noli De Castro to spare the country from further turmoil and violence by ***immediately resigning*** from their respective positions as President and Vice-President of the Philippines;

2. Demand the holding of a ***Special Presidential and Vice-Presidential Election*** within Sixty (60) Days from the date of the resignation of GMA and Noli de Castro, pursuant to **Section 10, Article VII of the 1987 Constitution**;

May God bless our Great Nation!

DONE this November 2007.

SNAP ELECTIONS Now!

Sign Online Petition at www.petitiononline.com/snap08 Read Relevant Articles and Prominent Petitioners at www.snap08.blogspot.com

This Constitutional Option will re-establish Democracy in the country.

LLDA gets a break

[redacted] ...mary Lito Atienza has backpedaled from his call for the abolition of the Laguna Lake Development Authority and has agreed to work with the agency to dismantle illegal fish pens in Laguna de Bay.

Atienza and LLDA manager Felipe Olondo agreed to immediately clear the lake of hundreds of illegal fish pens that have been blamed for the worsening pollution in the lake.

"The LLDA must look at cost laws pertaining to pollution and enforce them," Atienza said.

Olondo said he was able to convince Atienza the illegal pens were only one of the causes of pollution in the lake that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the LLDA had to curb. —TJ Burgonio

On the occasion of the 55th founding anniversary of the San Beda Law Alumni Association, the San Beda College of Law and the San Beda Law Alumni Association invite all Bedan Law Alumni from 1948 to 2007 to the Annual Homecoming and Fellowship night on November 27, 2007, Tuesday, 6PM at the One Esplanade, SM Central Business Park, Seaside corner Bay Boulevard, Pasay City.

Gracing the event as guest of honor and speaker is Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. For inquiries, contact Wilma at 735-5995 or 09178072222, SBC Alumni Office, Mendiola, Manila.

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GMA solons go for the kill

From page A1

find the Public complaints sufficient in form after it was duly endorsed by a congressman and referred to the committee on justice, thereby putting in effect a one-year constitutional ban on another impeachment case against Ms. Arroyo.

The committee will resume its hearing on Wednesday to tackle the issue of whether the complaint is sufficient to substance.

By refusing the supplemental and addendum sworn affidavits with a week complaint, Tamano or later they will find the Public complaint sufficient in substance, he said. So, it's only a matter of time before it will be disposed," said Senate Deputy Majority Leader Serpah Genuino of Mindanao.

Members of the minority said they had hoped some independent administration congressmen would support their moves to allow the Tamano addendum.

They, however, only hinted themselves and the Public complaint endorser—Cagayan Rep. Edgar San Luis—leaning for the supplemental complaint.

"The members of the minority do not wish to participate in this proceeding for as long as the addendum and the supplemental complaint submitted by Attorney Tamano is not part of it," Locsin said.

"I think this will allow the committee to proceed with its business according to its duty, according to its pleasure and its interest and dispose as quickly as possible of this sham impeachment complaint," he said.

Accusations dismissed

Quezon City Rep. Matias Defensor, committee chair, shrugged off Cojuangco's accusation that the committee was engaged in a move to railroad the impeachment complaint after Malacañang gave such gifts from P200,000 to P500,000 on Oct. 11.

"It's definitely untrue although it was major concern ... We have no senators here to do anything based on the allegations of the several people," Defensor said, referring to the allegations of cash gifts distributed to Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. and Senate Majority Leader Francisco Pangilinan.

Defensor said the committee would not be swayed by the allegations of Cojuangco, who is also a member of the committee, because the latter was not a witness to the alleged distribution of cash gifts.

"I think that will allow the committee to proceed with its business according to its duty, according to its pleasure and its interest and dispose as quickly as possible of this sham impeachment complaint," he said.

"You talk of due process, what about our right to participate? ... I'm chair of my party," Manila Rep. Ma. Theresa Bonoan-David said in reaction to the opposition's tirades against the administration lawmakers' inequity.

Unfortunate

"It's unfortunate ... they have lost the forum for them to prove that they're innocents, to prove that they did not receive bribe," Bonoan-David reporters follow-up the walkout.

"Because they did not want a credible impeachment proceeding, they blocked every move that we made," he said.

Defensor in the morning had ruled that the motion on Oct. 11 of the complaint to the committee on justice made by Deputy Speaker Raul del Mar of Cebu was valid. The referral then imposed the one-year ban against any more impeachment complaints against Ms. Arroyo.

Bedimo questioned that validity of that referral since the motion of Independent Speaker Jose de Venecia as the only one who could refer the impeachment complaint to the committee on justice. "Delegated power cannot be further delegated," he argued.

Following a motion for a ruling by the chair on the matter, Defensor promptly declared Del Mar's referral following instructions from De Venecia valid and in accordance with the rules of the House and with the Constitution.

Addendum new complaint?

The minority first questioned Defensor's action to admit on Nov. 6 to their surprise, the 188-page supplemental complaint on the wife and witness any committee drillfest since. Tamano on Nov. 5 submitted to the committee his supplement to the Public complaint.

"The chairman obliterated the complaint before the committee could tackle the motion [the supplemental information] a new complaint? This is something to be debated," said Rep. Liza Maza of the progressive bloc in the House minority.

The majority countered that the addendum was a mere clarificatory altogether and that, as chair, Defensor had the "inherent authority" to enforce the rules of the House.

The rules on impeachment those that no new complaint against the same respondent official may be filed after one has already been referred to the committee on justice.

"[The Tamano addendum] is a new complaint in the guise of an amendment," said Deputy Speaker Eduardo Zialcita, representative of Magsaysay. Zialcita is a former chair of the committee on justice.

"The chair has the inherent authority to enforce the rules of the House," said Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, a vice chair of the House committee on justice.

Plan to go to court

Starting 27 if, the administration-dominated committee upheld Defensor's authority to admit the supplemental information Tamano.

After a lunchtime break, the minority removed with the intention of this complaint also gives Congress the golden opportunity to correct the anomalous and ridiculous practice of haranguing impeachment complaints for one year after a complaint has been filed and referred to the House committee on justice," they said.

"We are ready to defend the complaint in the justice committee, the plenary and even the Supreme Court," they added.

Quezon City Rep. Matias Defensor, chair of the House committee on justice, said the committee would discuss the new complaint if it is referred to the committee. With a report from Christine O. Avendaño

Left files new case against President

From page A1

Cortez said, remained concerned with holding Ms Arroyo accountable for the alleged corruption in the 2004 campaign fund against Poe, the late movie actor who lost the race.

Former Vice President Teofisto Guingona also signed as a complainant, along with National Artist Bienvenido Lumbera, Bandido Ed Jacinto, Isabel Mary Adve Shamsuran and former Malacañang Rep. Rafael Mariano.

Other organizations represented in the complaint included the Confederation of Unity Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees, Peasant Bayan Muna Representative Satur Ocampo and Teodoro Casiño, Gabriela Representatives Liza Maza and Luz Ilagan, and Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran endorsed the complaint.

"Members of the progressive party-list bloc are endorsing the complaint in order to give Congress the opportunity to provide a remedy to an urban—one-sided and short-proceeding based on the three-page impeachment complaint," the five lawmakers said in a joint statement. They referred to the case filed by lawyer Raul Daño. (See related story on Page A2.)

"The filing and endorsements of this complaint also

Plan to go to court

Starting 27 if, the administration-dominated committee upheld Defensor's authority to admit the supplemental information Tamano.

After a lunchtime break, the minority removed with the intention of one of a motion for reconsideration of Defensor's action or to admit the supplemental complaint.

Defensor, however, would no longer have any of it as he argued that the committee, through its vote, already upheld his decision to admit the supplemental complaints instead of allowing the committee take jurisdiction over it.

"The issue is already res judicata," Defensor said.

Tamano said he would question the committee's actions before the Supreme Court.

Dalido's complaint accused the Arroyo couple of "indecent exposure after she allegedly failed to stop the $329-million national broadband contract with China's ZTE Corp. despite allegations of overpricing and bribery against Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos.

Tamano's addendum alleged that the President herself was involved after Jose de Venecia III, the Speaker's son, said she told her nonconcomitant planning secretary to approve the contract.

Tamano also referred to the alleged payoffs to congressmen in Malacañang.

Lacson says cash gifts taken from police funds

From page A1

told Pandilla about some "help" coming for barangay projects.

Montoya said the P500,000 that he and Pandilla each got was given to him in the presence of certain officials inside a Pulsar room.

Montoya, Pandilla maintained that he planned to use the money for a public park honoring Bulacan's heroes and artists. Pandilla said he would not use the money until its source was established.

Lacson brought the Senate inquiry into what he described as "clean or bribery." If the senators consider the cash handouts normal like the pork barrel, it would set a bad precedent when government funds are distributed in cash rather than special allotment release orders (Sars) through the Department of Budget and Management, he said.

Lacson claimed that the investigation would ease out the real source of the money.

Kampi, DILG or PNP?

One of the biggest sources of the money distributed in Malacañang was the Bureau of Customs, according to a source, whose rank is equivalent to a general in the military. The source did not want to be named, owing to the sensitivity of the issue.

According to the police official, the money was entered as a "special fund" in the PNP budget, purported to go to not for the PNP's counterintelligence program in the name of the military's area campaigns.

The checks for the fund were cleared in the name of the PNP in July, the source said. The money was later transferred to the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the source added.

Camp Crame talk

In Camp Crame, this report is talked about in circles and narrowed down to four the money came from that "special fund."

The PNP source had asked around and confirmed that the money could not have been reimbursed from the PNP's recruitment budget because the money he that originated from the 2001 General Appropriations.

He also suggests you (They) contact 'much if because it's part of the 2001 budget," he said.

DILG more expressedly took the money in tranches, handing the P5,000 bills in stacks of cash in July, the source said.

"It was unpleasant (The space was not enough to fit in all the money)," the source said.

The source said the Arroyo might not know about the operation. Asked why, the source said: "The President has left party matters to Ronato (Puno) and other Kampi leaders."

Deputy Speaker Ma. Amelia Villarosa had earlier confirmed that it was Kampi that gave money to its members following their supposed requests for financial help for civil projects.

Villarosa, who represents Occidental Mindoro, said Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno and Commerce Sec Ingr. Luis Villa-Fuerte, Kampi president, knew about the money distributed to congressmen.

Palace denial

Pandilla and Montoya earlier asked the Office of the President to confirm if the money indeed came from that office because it was given at the Palace grounds.

In an Dec. 10 letter, the Finance department of Malacañang denied it disbursed such an amount to their provinces.

After a string of denials by several of the leaders, the League of Provinces of the Philippines claimed ownership of the money given to Pandilla and Montoya.

Palawan Gov. Joel Reyes, LPP spokesperson, said Eastern Samar Gov. Sam Ponce Enrile, LPP secretary general, said the funds came from the league's P22-million account for a "capability building" program intended for new governors.

But the statue only caused Pandilla to doubt that the LPP was the real source of the money.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said the investigation was meant to let the public know what really happened on Oct. 11, especially what was the reason for and when the money came from. If the act would be classified as a bribe, the recipients could not easily give it away to the masses because the money should be used as evidence for the crime, he said.

Pointless exercise?

But three administration senators behind the investigation as a pointless exercise since it has yet on be established that the money came from Malacañang.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile maintained that the senators who called for the probe should first establish that the act of giving away cash was indeed an act of bribery before conducting an inquiry into the matter.

Sen. Richard Gordon concurred, claiming that the Ombudsman and not the Senate was in the best position to disentangle whether the was bribery or not. "I don't know if it's bribe, the elements of the bribe be all streets and purposes, they could be giving money for their political constituents or political support," Gordon said in an interview.

For the money to be considered a bribe, Gordon said something must say that they were given the P200,000 to P500,000 worth of cash marked in a Manila envelope or brown bag to do something like voting a certain way or granting a project to a benefactor contractor.

"What makes it wrong is when the source of money is from justice that's only a public official should know the source of the money. If that is from government funds, that is always done by many Philippine Presidents because it is different from pork barrel," Enrile said.

For Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, there was nothing wrong about the cash gifts as explained by the officials in question, except that the distribution was made at the Palace.

Santiago said the President was not only a leader of the country but the head of her party Kampi. "It is a valid defense if it is raised by the administration officials that the money distributed originated in Malacañang was not in the decision of the dissidents or a council of the coalition of the President's coalition party."

"There will be no illegality because all political parties are supposed to get financial backing to all its candidates to get everyone. There would be nothing wrong in that position," Santiago said. With a report from Rosa Z. Pulumbarit

'Bad vibes' force Neri to vacate CHEd office

From page A1

room one floor up upon the advice of Chinese feng shui expert.

Apparently, contributing's wrong in the room, Romulo Neri told the Inquirer.

Commissioner Nona Ronilo said Neri's office had problems connected with Neri said.

A CHED old timer described the office on the fifth floor of the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) building on San Miguel Avenue at Ortigas Center as "perfect for some people and quiet, but at times it could send others down your spine."

According to Neri, "the new office is no more than 40 square meters. It is slightly bigger than the fifth floor office. Before I transferred, it was very basic and quiet only I noticed. It had a table and some chairs. I had to bring up a sofa and a small conference table with four chairs."

Idyllic spot

The new office may not look like a palace, but it offers the panorama of Architectural Digest, but it is "definitely marbulan (spacious)."

"The room has its own toilet and bath.... And it wasn't cost the commission a thing," Neri said.

CHED's "monthly rental rate is P63,125.00, or P7,695,000.00 a year," Ronilo noted.

DAP president Antonio Rabor, "being good friends with the chair, offered that suppose only idyllic spot...adjacent to his sixth floor office—free of charge," Ronilo said.

Harmony and balance

Neri also sought the advice of the same feng shui expert when he was with the Department of Budget and Management and the National Economic Development Authority.

Feng shui, as defined by Business Dictionary Website's Unabridged Dictionary, is the Chinese art or practice of creating harmonious surroundings that enhance the balance of life and living, as in arranging furniture or determining the siting of a house.

Its feng shui influences like Neri, harmony and balance can result from the manipulation and channeling of nonphysical forces or energies by means of the proper placement of physical objects.

Some areas are not suitable for human settlement and should be left to their natural state, according to Neri's feng shui consultant.

"Apparently, the old office on the fifth floor is one of them," Ronilo said.

Better view

At his sixth floor office, Neri will "mostly have a much better view of what's going on downstairs," according to some CHED staff members.

The CHED occupies the entire fifth floor, which houses the commissioners' offices and portions of the DAP building ground floor.

Sen. Ina Santiago writes from Honolulu Maragsal Arroyo on resolutions the commission from August this year to February 2006.

He took over the CHED portfolio on Aug. 16 due to Carlos Primo alleged failure to aggressively implement the bilateral education program.

Positive energies

Higher education stakeholders like the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Council are closely monitoring the ongoing parties of alleged CHED anomalies.

One Pure official said he hoped the "positive energies" in Neri's office would counteract the CHED chair in uplifting the house on every person involved in the controversial National Broadband Network project of the Arroyo administration.

"If that happens, only then will I believe in feng shui," quipped the educator who asked not to be named.

Neri had earlier testified in a Senate hearing that three Commissioners on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Jr. had offered him P200 million to endorse a proposal of China's ZTE Corp. to modernize the NBN project.

Abalos denied the charge and later quit his post.

'Boracay mansion' has 2 titles

MANDAUE/MANDAUE Sheriff Ed Grieta yesterday began preparations for the public auction of the mansion of Pharmaceuticals Corp. Chairman Jose Pepito Sagsoing in Boracay.

At the same time, the Land Registration Authority ordered the Quezon City government to relinquish its title to the property.

"We have not received an order from the court stopping us from implementing the writ of execution so we will push through with the public bidding of the Boracay mansion," Grieta told the Inquirer.

He said he hoped to have the auction by Nov. 15.

Grieta said he received an order from the court stopping implementation of the writ of execution after Sagsoing's lawyers filed a motion for reconsideration.

Sagsoing was President Aquino's godfather at his baptism in 1960.

The smaller 2,000-sq m portion was still titled to Sagsoing's Holdings.

Rodrigo said he only found this out recently when the smaller portion, utilized as PGMI's office, was included in the list of properties scheduled for auction on Dec. 11. The city treasurer immediately delisted the property to avoid further conflict with the landowners, Jocelyn R. Uy and Jessica I. Andrada.

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Corrections

IN THE NOV 9 ISSUE, a front page story—"She saved the last dance for him"—misstated the official position that Reto Sagsoing held in the administration of Corazon Aquino: Sagsoing was President Aquino's spokesperson—and her chief legal counsel.

* * *

IN THE NOV. 10 ISSUE, a front page story—"Marianne burial today; Church in dilemma"—misstated the Web address of a Catholic news provider. The Web address is www.ncrcn.org—not www.rcnrh.org.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, another front-page article—"Bone recovering but still in the dark on wife's fate"—misstated the elective position that Shirley Reyes once held. Reyes is a former vice governor—not former representative—of Batangas.

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INQUIRER

OPINION

All sound and fury

EDITORIAL

THERE IS ONE WAR WE DON'T WANT TO END RIGHT away. And it is not just because it is always fun to watch prominent politicians go at each other's throat, but because the nation could benefit a lot from the revelations they might make in an extended exchange of words.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile on Thursday last week accused Speaker Jose de Venecia of lobbying for the ₱550-million North Luzon Railways Corp. (Northrail) project. Enrile recalled that after he had delivered a privilege speech in 2005 to denounce the project, the Speaker asked for a private meeting during which the latter asked the senator "not to sink the boat." The contract for the project was overpriced and ridden with onerous conditions, particularly one that would allow China to take "all the monies of the Republic abroad" in case of default on the payment of the loan used to finance the project, he said.

Earlier Enrile accused the Speaker of also lobbying for the award of a contract to establish the National Broadband Network project to Amsterdam Holdings Inc., a company owned by De Venecia's son, Jose III. The government decided to give the project to the Chinese firm, ZTE Corp., but was forced to cancel it after the younger De Venecia charged that the contract was overpriced and linked First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo and former Comelec Chairman Benjamin Abalos to alleged kickbacks and payoffs.

De Venecia admitted that he had met with Enrile on the Northrail project, but added that everything he did was "above-board." He urged Enrile to act like a statesman and stop making "those unfair accusations," saying the Northrail project was "not a ZTE." He also questioned why Enrile was raising the issue in the wake of the ZTE scandal and said this was "a form of retaliation" for the damaging testimony his son made before the Senate.

All this only made Enrile angrier. Referring to De Venecia's call for a "moral revolution" to put an end to corruption in government, Enrile said: "I am furious at hypocrites, those who pretend to be what they are not. He is a bolero, but he cannot make a fool out of me." Then he went on to hurl more threats: "Tell the Speaker not to badmouth me... I know more things about him, especially since 1990, and if I am forced to reveal them, I don't know where he will pick himself up from. I know his true character."

Such threats and counter-threats open some very interesting possibilities, not the least of which is that the public may finally know the truth behind some of the biggest scandals plaguing the Arroyo administration. If Enrile delivers, then the public might know better how the government entered into a contract with China National Machinery and Equipment Corp. to build a railways system costing ₱800 million per kilometer, and who existed how much from what then Senator President Franklin Drilon called "a colossal corrupt deal." The public might also know how deeply involved the Speaker was in his son's projects with the government, including the aborted NBN deal.

On the other hand, there is a possibility that De Venecia would give us far less than what he deems to be the administration's retaliation for his son's explosive revelations on the NBN project. He may have friends who know more about the deal and will help flesh out the story behind what now appears to be a criminal conspiracy to siphon off billions of pesos from an unnecessary project. Or if sufficiently provoked, he may be able to muster enough support among his allies to send an impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo to the Senate, where every sordid detail of the conspiracy could be dissected.

But if a bureaucrat like former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Rolando Neri can been and have on the President's side in the NBN contract, can those two politicians be expected to reveal the whole truth behind those scandalous transactions? Enrile's warning to De Venecia against badmouthing him are not the words of a reformer who is ready to expose wrongdoing but of a politician who is willing to cut a deal. You shut up on the NBN, and I clam up on the same case, the Northrail project, and your other shenanigans. Now with Malacañang signaling its concern over the sound war, it could soon be a close deal. And the Filipino will again have to search elsewhere for the truth that is being sacrificed in the bargain.

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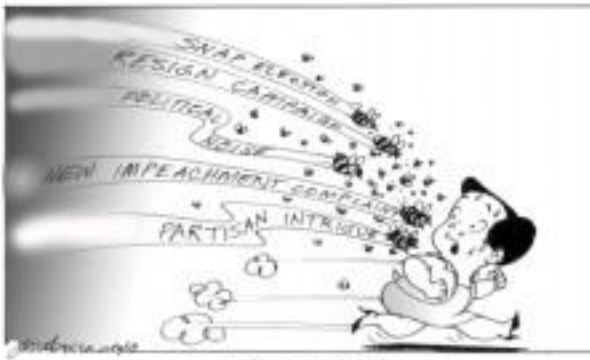

Book storm

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

CHINA BLEW ITS TOP OVER THE WEEKEND. Beijing's pique didn't stem from the flubby US debut regarding the value of the RMB (Chinese yuan renmibi). Neither did the unwanted embassy by Burma's pacesetter junta ink. The fury exploded around a book—the Bible.

China's religious affairs authorities and Olympic organizers have not banned the bible," an avowed Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao snapped in a hastily-called press conference.

His denial acquired a regret, by the Italian newspaper La Gazzetta dello Sport, that Beijing would prohibit the "carrying [of] any kind of religious symbol at Olympic facilities." The "Bible ban" story exploded on the evening news and triggered worldwide fire-exchanges.

The International Olympic Committee confirmed Beijing's denial, Associated Press reported: "Religious services will be available in the Olympic Village."

Li Zhanjiang, Beijing Olympics media center director, was quoted by Malaysian news, that the bible and qur'an, should be available."

Beijing assets manifest Olympian stifling. It is spending 340 billion yuans (-US$ 46 billion) to host the 2008 Games in building spoke things of a "harmonious society." Its 2,000 hotels and buildings sport satellite dishes and transport links. Government is busy about the Autumn Games underbudgeting." Moscow's Izvestia news agency reports, "The Chinese Olympics promises to be the most expensive sports event in human history."

Beijing is adamant in saying that this build-up, the final objective has also become a negative "for groups wishing to put pressure on China on religious issues." Especially Beijing's support of Myanmar's junta," the Guardian reports. This newspaper suggests at the opening day scene.

Other than the fact that it has been translated into more than 2,300 languages and dialects, what is it about the Bible that rules bubble?

Isaiah destiny, for example, bans it, even within humans. Burma prohibits its translation. In 2003, governor Ip Kwok-him of Hong Kong's campus to print a ban on bibles, published in the dialects of the Basta of Borneo, Thailand, in contrast, has a tradition of interfaith cooperation and tolerance.

"Many people are bothered by those passages in the Bible [that they cannot understand," Mark Twain remembered. "The passages that trouble me most are those that I do understand."

Psychologists tell us that the word 'bible' comes from the Latin biblia. "The Christian scriptures were written in Greek, as 'Ta Biblia' as early as 223. The Old Testament is a collection of books written by John to the Jewish Jesus. The New Testament contains the life and teachings of Jesus, letters of Paul and other disciples to the early Church, and includes the book of Revelation.

"The Bible is literature, not dogma," the philosopher George Santayana explains. Some deeper and deeper have known and will study literature. "For everything there is a season ... A time to be born and a time to die..." Other times make readers scratch their heads. "Forever the rest to leave you," Beth wife Naomi. "For where you go, I will go, And where you lodge, I shall lodge. Your people shall be my people, And your God my God," first Psalm 23 has consoled generations. "Even though I walk through the valley of darkness, I will fear no evil. For you are with me."

Pope Benedict XVI's second book reading the Jesus-bible shaped his outlook of Messiah by peaceful means. Indeed, the Bible offers points, like the 10 Commandments which have been watered down to "10 suggestions" in today's new-age. "Boy, when you tell about the Ten Commandments," editor H. L. Mencken wrote, "You always come back to the pleasant fact that there are only 10 of them."

Beijing won't live if all Olympic athletes, even Taliban-trained bibles. The concern stems from "more than 100 million religious adherents" in China. A February 2007 survey, by Shanghai researchers, concluded, "21.4 percent of Chinese citizens ages 16 and over, or 300 million persons, are religious."

"This is approximately three times the official figure reported by the Government in April 2006," says the 2007 International Religious Freedom Report, submitted by State Department to the US Congress. "Approximately 40 million citizens identify themselves as Christians and 300 million identify themselves as Buddhists, Taoist, etc."

"Increasing literacy in Christianity resulted in a corresponding increase in the demand for bibles," the report adds. Unregistered church members find supply and distribution problematic in rural areas, lagging behind fast-growing demand.

In China today, you can buy bibles and second hand of other bibles at bookstores and in some "officially recognized churches." But government officials still jail printing presses. Beijing's tourist trinkets, published without authorization, have been seized and forfeited, may be bonfire or art soul, publishing houses maybe published. Bowing publishing brings on stiff fines and jail terms.

Individuals cannot order bibles directly from publishing houses." Both purchases of bibles "could bring unfavorable attention to the purchaser." Customs officials monitor for the "smuggling" of bibles and other religious materials into the country.

Is this concern exaggerated? Did napoleon have a point of no return? every data off bibles. Otherwise, we'll discover what the Guillotine meant when he said. "Everyone who listens to my words, and acts on them, will be like the wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, and the winds blew. But the house stood because it was built on rock."

(E-mail: jlmmercado@gmail.com)

Corruption kills

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

AT THE TIME THE MVRS HOLT MASS. were Arroyo taking her own life appointed on set from page, another term appointed there and more prominently. It was not headline story, "Senate pushes snub gibe." Alongside that story was the accompanying piece, "Others offered cabinet slots from Burma."

The two latter stories told the tale that accounted Burma's brainwashing losing a meeting of local officials some weeks ago and but that Malacañang would locate DMS Secretary running in a new cabinet post. DMS has been running a ... suggesting at the very least incompetence of impeachable proportions. Malacañang would not see fit to remove him, based on the admission by some cacophonic themselves, is that the local officials received anywhere from P200,000 to P500,000. (Those who declared the lower figure probably did not want to part with a bigger bribe to friends and foes.) How is it known based on estimates, is that the payoffs amounted to around P120 million.

While that was going on, while hundreds of thousands of poors were stalking down like looters from trees to fall in the spacious fluxes grounds, while we were busy carting to disinfecting the source of eruptions of this plan-made, there was this 11-year-old kid in the pit of Davao who wanted to go to school but could not because she had no fare, no bag, and no money to buy the most basic school supplies. Indeed, who wanted to go to school but could not because she had to help her mother wash clothes for other people to put food on their table. There was this 11-year-old girl who wanted a circle to meet for her parents and siblings, if one for herself, and finding only a cold world that offered no light, no comfort, no hope; indeed finding only a dead world that offered no help, no aid, no exit, she decided to end her life.

If your heart doesn't bail at that, you ought to throw yourself off the nearest building, the highest the better just to be sure. Though that would be redundant... you're already dead.

Indeed, in yesterday Concordia hope Manuel's death has gotten left on the country. It was causing it from no double and doubly, suspected of being fed someone and stench again and again, and not being able to see or hear or smell or taste it. So, of being etched by a knife in various parts of the body again and again, and of being stripped each time, and not being able to feel it, maybe she just subdued on very harsh wound should help. If it can bring a yelp from us, it will have done its work.

The two stories put side by side—the middle of the 11-year-old girl's suicide and the homicide of the nation by public officials from corruption—do not just add new dimensions to the meaning of the term "social volcano." Though they do a magnificent job of it. We must find a matter-of-fact between these spectacles of the lowly and infamous and the wretchedness of the poor and anonymous in the country that is those two images.

But they offer more than that, they offer a glimpse into the true meaning, or essence, of corruption. They show us in the most poignant and horrible way what makes corruption the craziest, ugliest, vilest thing there is. That is: Corruption kills twice. Corruption kills.

The two stories do not just offer a contrast, they offer a sense and effect. The hand that fed the pigs around the boats that Malacañang used in hung herself might have been here, his sheer were other hands there too. Hands that pushed her to her stuffed when her fare fell, bread and her hands wrenched for a moment, and that tightened the noose around her neck when she wondered if light might see pass through a crack in her dark hole after all, hands that pushed her to the void before all a sudden snap of her neck broke her fall and ended all thought and care and speculation forever.

They were the hands of everyone involved in that scam in Malacañang. They were the hands of everyone involved in all the scams that have befallen this country with the tolerance and regularity of the super-storms.

We need to think of corruption as something abstract, particularly when it involves mind-boggling sums. But we need to think of it as a system that, as Jose Ma. Sison has pointed out in various colloquiums, a game that has to do with the division of goods and the ways that go on among and between them over it, a game that has little to do with use.

Putting it that way makes corruption as something abstract, particularly when it involves mind-boggling sums. But we need to think of it as a system that, as Jose Ma. Sison has pointed out in various colloquiums, a game that has to do with the division of goods and the ways that go on among and between them over it, a game that has little to do with use.

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Corruption is gratifying the scraps of food from the table of the hungry. It is raising the penury misery of a Grade 6 kid having time to wait in rapid rubber slippers, in the afternoon heat or raining flood, on railroad. It is pushing an 11-year-old up the ladder of a catwalk, keeping the rope around her neck, and kicking her to the void below in the almost inaudible sound of a fragile neck snapping. Corruption is not just something they do to themselves, it is something they do to us.

Corruption takes away. Corruption kills.

Economic cluster should explain NorthRail project

BE TLEW TO HOBELLU NA PIL FOR A PEW Days to attend the wedding of a Cuisson showpolishing up on basic Ilonggo. I couldn't believe a lot of developments. I had only one anniversary event to have anchored since with regard to the NorthRail project. I have supported this project since it was being programmed, for I have always believed that an efficient railway system is one way to help ease traffic congestion in the metro, especially in the Luzon area. In fact, in the Third World countries, cities by rail, I always had admitted every time my vehicle is stopped at the Buendia-Taft intersection in Makati to relieve those unscrupulous motorcycle riders (subsidized by some rebel-without-a-cause) who maneuver their motorcycles in between cars. I also felt happy about the prospect of the burgeoning future Manila by having modern trains bring people to work in the metropolis and transport cities back to the suburbs.

* * *

I feel that Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile's attack against Speaker Jose de Venecia on this project is misplaced. Enrile's fire is directed at the transcompanies of Neda, Boracay and transportation officials who should be held responsible for any alleged wrongdoing. Led by then Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima, they signed the deal naming the Chinese consortium. Many of JDV's allies that developed close ties with Chinese officials over the years, was to convince them to get into the NorthRail project—part of his vision of railways in the whole length of Luzon, from the southernmost Luzon, Pasay and Northern Mindanao.

Why isn't the Cabinet's economic cluster explaining this?

* * *

The 62-km project, the Chinese government's first railway project in Southeast Asia and funded with a soft loan over a 20-year period, has been awarded multiple implementation contracts. It is small that the Senate under Franklin Drilon held hearings in late 2006 on the extension of informal services on the railroad tracks and the alleged overpricing of the project. So far, there have been four—not one of the three new allegations of

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cuneta

corruption, the time to watch the value was done. The government's conscience now leads some people to suspect that politics has to do with it.

* * *

JDV names are also the negotiations involved, on the Chinese side, vice president, vice prime minister, vice speaker of parliament and three ambassadors, and on the JDV side, the economic team, three ambassadors and Foreign Secretaries Delia Albert and Alberto Romulo. The implication is, he's could anything to (allegedly) negotiated an wrong? It's a crime that all the attention and spotlight should come not at the beginning, but when Vice President Noli de Castro had already taken into the 44,000 informal settler families and work on Phase 1 is under way.

From the way we seem to be churning down every hot-topic current, into the handling the foreign policy and security matters, why not "Investigate" The Senate only now being ripped apart when it is in the signing stage. Other countries are fighting for foreign investments, but our politics is affecting them away.

* * *

Impeach economist Amando Tetangco observed yesterday that there's no critical mass to oppose strategic projects like this. There are people who do this daily. In the first place, most of the civil society leaders marching up and down in Makati have credibility problems themselves, having been accused of receiving funds from the very same entities they criticize. Others come operated ambitions. A key issue today is the so-called Peace pacts. But this can't stir up enough people because even peace lovers don't know the core of current administrations to give our funds

Test for women legislators

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

under the anti-vagrancy provision to be penalized. In fact, the very definition of prostitution itself, encompassing in the Code of Muslim Personal Laws which permits the marriage of girls under 16 years, polygamy and arranged marriages, and the policy of some schools disciplining female students (but not male students) who are pregnant while still single.

Those defenders of the "Magna Carta" embrace women, argue, are also those who are opposed to measures recognizing the role of women in nation building, including greater protection against violence, participation and representation in government, access to resources, credit and capital, and the ending of long-derogatory and stereotypical images of women in the media, and economic and social rights of marginalized women.

The proposed "Magna Carta" will also strengthen the Philippine Commission on Women, which will be the overall monitoring body of the Magna Carta; even as it provides "real-fund" power to the Commission on Women's rights.

* * *

THE GOOD news is that the proposed "Magna Carta of Women" has found champions in both houses of Congress. In the House of Representatives, Speaker President Manuel Villar and Sen. Pia Cayetano have filed their own versions of the "Magna Carta" bill. In the Senate, Pambansang Bay. Rosa Olivares and Marcos Rep. Irmina Talaga have both filed early versions of the "Magna Carta," while deputy majority floor leader Bello Rep. Juan Ponce Enrile has expressly agreed "in principle" to the measure's version.

In the last Congress, the Committee on Rules

to support one for our four senses. In they politicos, the priests or NGO leaders. In fact, there seem to be more citizens' groups that are more interested while the Visiting Forces Agreement was being deliberated upon or to members of Congress to pass the long-delayed Equity Law.

That is not to say that Enrile ought to be arrested. But there's a lot of issues that abuse this issue. In the first place, Congress has the power to pass, reject or vote the budget submitted by the executive. Why do its members jab so much finish at the hands of the Presidency?

* * *

The country's conscience was stirred by the recent suicide of 12-year-old disadvantaged Jaypee in Davao. I have a few thoughts, one that uniquely. One is that everyone has to share the blame: sure, some politicians squander political funds, but many of us are too comfortable and unconcerned. In other countries, Jaypee would be Aurora's Pi Pasquale Giordano who married the rise in corporate social responsibility among companies; but on the same occasion, Fr. Jimmy Belmonte, whose heroic efforts to live to rescue Manila's impoverished children from the uncertainties the Dumok Legion of Boxers, opined that not enough help is being received by those who can afford it. I agree.

But today's debate is not about Enrile. Mariano's suicide underscored and which Fr. Pierre Tritz, founder of Tesda Foundation, realized long ago: while nations is free in public elementary and high schools, requiring tuition, uniforms, school materials and project expenses are difficult for poor families to meet. Tritz normally supports about 30,000 poor public school students across the country. He has helped set up vocational schools there in school. Tesda Technical Vocational High School extends free five-year education and technical training to 600 poor high school students in Manila, requiring tuition as only employment right after graduation. About 700 students, however, are still without scholarships, and readers might wish to call administrator Bethlehem Ignacio for more information at 563-2688, 564-3886 and 564-3776.

* * *

PLOPIA, the national women's group which I chair, is taking the proposed "Magna Carta" seriously, and is calling for the immediate passage of the Magna Carta.

Let me close by quoting a passage which opens the Elihu bill, authored by former Sen. Helena Z. Benitez, one of the "icons" of the Philippines' women's movement: "The woman, whose womb is the first home of the human child, who is supposedly the true environment which is called the family which is bound in a basic by many economic, protection from domestic, and more facets of stability, and eventually a community and then becomes a nation-state."

Crazy thoughts

WE WERE CLASSMATES LAST SUMMER. I'M PRETTY SURE he didn't know me. I didn't know him either. I'm not just a shy, online' here, the cute guy who was always out for class. I got to notice him because I always sat near the door. So, I didn't have to turn back. I saw him walk—a girl more, probably his girlfriend. Having him as my boat'lead would be painful, I thought.

Summer class passed quickly. I had no worries of nervousness spend before the first midterm. I had already forgotten the familiar face. I opened to much of his voluntary enough reason for me not to think of him.

YOUNG BLOOD

Jenny Marasigan

He seems to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twenty-somethings and below. — Ed.

The regular summer came. How that I was to take up more units to graduate except the Physics. (Sorry lecturer and laboratory). So I felt reassured that I would be seeing the same group of people every day, people who had been my classmates in the previous years. Good for me, I prefer dealing with people whom I already know than having to know strangers in the middle of the school year.

Physics laboratory was scheduled once a week. At the first session, there were less than 10 people in the room. Here I realized the class would be dissolved so that I could change my schedule and enroll in the same class where it's lively were. Nevertheless, I got used to the small group. I was divided into groups—a permanent arrangement for the whole semester. I didn't know anyone of the class, true!

I waited for the announcements, the following week came and still there was no announcement; the class was not going to be dissolved. So I was resolute, to stay more. I went, and when I opened the door, it—and behold, there he was! Sitting with my groupmates was the familiar face the previous session. I guessed them his didn't say a word to him.

Having him in the same class and as a groupmate (more than an) impact on me. There was no quickening of the heartbeat, no flushed face, no sweaty hands, and definitely no awkward feelings, no regrets again that I was falling for him.

I know I am a little old to talk about crushes. But what can't do? I am a hopeless romantic. I am a no-boyfriend since birth girl. She sure has some mind-warning me and I only know of a few guys who like me. Most of the guys I liked never felt the same for me. Maybe it's because I am not pretty, or maybe I do as them. Girly clothes and makeups are not for me. I am in command with my shirt, jeans and Chuck Taylors.

Okay, the point is I didn't have a "thing" for him. But actually, I wouldn't help looking at his cute face. His sense of mind, biological, our air formation and, hmmm, physique were quite appealing. I admit he is attractive. He is neither tall nor the muscle-type. I'd didn't notice anyway. He wore his group mates. That was it. My only concern was that we finished on time our activities and mess up with a project before the semester ended.

Meeting him outside class as to know him personally. He only talked about what to do, what the answers in the worksheet should be, whether we were doing the right thing. In short, the only topic we talked about was our subject. Although we sometimes shared some laugh when we did mindset during our activities, we were all business.

On the day we had to present our report on our project, I saw him with a girl again. I thought it was the same girl I saw last summer. But the thing was, it didn't affect me in any way. So what if he had a girlfriend? I didn't feel any jealousy or sadness. My point was: I really didn't have a thing for him. And that was that.

After our class that day, he still ahead of us. (But that was what he always did.) When I came out of the building minutes later, I saw his car will parked outside. Maybe he was waiting for someone, I thought. When I passed near his car, he opened the window and said, "Hi." I was surprised. I looked at him and, of course, I didn't refuse. Actually I was wanting for that moment to come. And that moment brought me to final time.

The car ride took less than 10 minutes. But that very short span of time was one of the best times of my life. We talked, but at first it was awkward. I was nervous. I was surprised. The spontaneous because I was afraid he might get the impression that I was interested in him. But he told me things about him. I had a feeling that would be the start of getting to know him, and of total good friendship.

When I stepped out of his car, that was when the thoughts came: Is it a date? Is he into me? Does he like me? Does he want to know me and get close to me? Does he like me? But it can't be. I must not forget the possibility that he already has a girlfriend, right? Why he just being a gentleman? I will never know.

Night came and I still couldn't get him out of my head. I had to study but I couldn't concentrate because the thought of him and what happened that afternoon kept coming back to me. Visions of the two of us inside his car kept flashing in my mind. I knew I was wasting my time but I couldn't help imagining things about us. What if he admits that he likes me? I don't want to be in a relationship, but I would like to experience that, like I really want him. Now I am admitting that I do have a crush for him. I was just ignoring it because I felt there was no chance of satisfying that feeling. I have those crazy thoughts...

I couldn't wait to get to class next class session. He was in my mind's eye the whole time. I was excited to see him and to talk to him. The day came. But he—the thing that imagined between us were an exchange of hand waves and flicked eyebrows as a sign of recognition. He didn't talk because I was busy reviewing for an exam later that afternoon and I also did not know what to say. I could hardly look straight into his eyes. He left me early and I was not expecting him to do otherwise. I only saw him.

While waiting, I put on my mp3 player and played "Secret" as the loudest volume. I didn't want to hear anything or talk to anyone. I realized that everything I was thinking about were just fantasies. I was just imagining things. I was trapped in a fantasy of stories. Why do I have to go through this, I asked myself almost to pity. I realized that last week's "encounter" hadn't happened. Being with him gave me an opening to unleash and express my feelings. And realized the fact that he had a girlfriend was killing me. I wanted to cry but no tears fell from my eyes.

Another flood of thoughts came: What's the point of my pains anyway? Is it only to entertain me? I guess he is not the right person for me, but I am getting tired of wanting. Why is life unfair? I mean him so much but I can never have him. I am crying for the second time. The second of the thought that I still can't have someone. There's some sense describing before and I guess I should be getting used to it.

Jenny Marasigan, 20, is a BS Chemistry student at the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

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Estrada outed as fake symbol

IF SOMETHING GOOD HAS COME out of Joseph Estrada's pardon, that is the fact that the "Our Glorious Movement" has at last been purged of a false symbol portentously representing the reassurance and the ideas of good government.

Prior to the pardon, several known opposition figures, in a make-believe, propped up Erap as the suffering figure against Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's malicious persecution. They had hoped that Erap's lifelong enticing the instinct of what remains of it, would strengthen the fledgling anti-GMA forces.

This curiosity in hunger for a familiar face is understandable. It is unprepared to venture new, though his only claim to suffering was to be confined in a private mansion where he could feast on sumptuous foods and indulge in playing Nero to the outside world.

But Erap has shown his true colors. "Involving in the thoughts of even one night in Mamitlapan, he sought successive clemency and now wants a different state...he ain't joining the mounting call for GMA's resignation.

His unreasoned only mobilized what has been clear from the very beginning. Erap can never be a distracting force against corruption for he himself is corrupt. He cannot rather is a new type of government for he is an old mayor. He cannot and against criminals in public office for he has been a plenary plunderer.

In other words, Erap is no different from GMA. And with Erap and GMA together, this old school clique suddenly finding love, this awful bomb has become known.

In a sense, this will prove beneficial to advocates of real change. They will no longer be burdened by a gaping contradiction, this blind was welcome in the person of Teofisto Guingona, who turned the Erap's freedom several years after his exciting "I forgive" speech.

For a time, GMA's strategy of identifying all the propagandists in this country, making her easier with Erap's eating was effective in keeping down many from the mass actions. But with Erap now under her hook, GMA has deprived herself of a convenient bogeyman. This time, she cannot blame her political ills for the widespread hatred of her regime. She can no longer make a sweeping charge that everyone who opposes her is an "Erap cronies."

Gone. She can no longer distract the brewing discontents as political bickering.

Ironically GMA does not realize the double-edged sword she is dangling over the people's heads. The opposition may not have a choice. And indeed, the country is moving on, without Erap, in opposing her. The struggle will finally go beyond the irrational personality-centered politics of Erap's fanatics.

The pardon will open the way for national unity GMA's backers proclaim. And, indeed, the nation—unexplained after having been scattered of the demise of a contrived pandemic rules has gone over to GMA's side—is now united, more than ever, in seeking her ouster.

Among the anti-GMA forces, the chief has been expected from the point. Erap has never assigned himself, has not the stature.

—ALEX AVISO,
Philippine Union for Nationalist Liberation Pursuit,
nationalist1@gmail.com

Of hardened stomachs and barf bags

THE REFERS TO THE HISTORY. at "Triumph of the ex-con," (Nov. 10, 26: 17) is scared: "And what do we get in return for this monstrous hangover? the dumpy bag, where the rule of law used to be."

Correction. What we got is a "barf bag." The style of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, pardoning a "ex-criminal" is undeniably monstrous. But only the most hardened "stomach for perversity" could take without throwing up.

—BEN BACELLE,
ramonbacelle@yahoo.com

Gloria and Erap: Same feather

ANOTHER CHAP BELIEVES FROM the President. There's no more respect left to me for this sick administration.

In all time, it shows that Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and Joseph Estrada are just the same. Traitors! Dan GMA—now, now, now!

—VI SUNIAGA,
kawi@cpcmagsa.com

Spineless, unprincipled ex-actor

THAT JOSEPH ESTRADA HAS finally begged for mercy and acknowledged the magnanimity of the presidency of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo supports his spineless, unprincipled and opportunistic heroic actor that he really is.

After donning in high humorous chair Mr. Arroyo's presidency was a "Mr. Clean" and "Mr. Incorruptible" (legendary more he was lured into the cold reality of impeachment. This hardly shows a memorable lighting for the poor and the oppressed.

Certainly, he is not of the mold of immortalize Jejomar Binay and Bong Revilla who fought the Marcos regime at great personal sacrifice. Estrada not only lied, tricked the masses whom he professed to serve and betrayed those who stuck with him. He hastily dropped by claiming that he abandoned his ambitions for the highest executive position.

Estrada reminds me of another opportunistic "friend" who swallow his hands after every failed coup and abandons those he made a pact with, only to finds another opportunity to pursue his lurking personal ambitions.

—RYAN ROSIDO,
rosido@alum.calarts.edu

GSIS has limits on condoning loans

THE INQUIRER PUBLISHED LAST Oct. 25 a letter from Samuel L. Yap asking the Government Service Insurance System to reconsider the housing loan of Isidro Bisenyo, who found it difficult to settle his loan obligation after marshal's death of her husband 23 years ago.

Yap said the GSIS merely sold off the house of Bellyng Mrs. Bisenyo where the GSIS considered the property as collateral for the loan of the parents of her late husband.

We hope Yap understands that income—whether employee, contractual, casual, owner, or even the president and general manager of the GSIS—has the power to use the land, unless this land is the sole building or machine of production of the income and the insurance benefits to its members.

The condonation and the restructuring plans are all the GSIS has at its power to help housing loan borrowers like Mrs. Bisenyo. As in her case, she was able to avail of her loan. But even condonation and restructuring programs...it may be limit public and private financial services because, typically, borrowers can only avail themselves of such programs once.

We hope Yap does not take it against the GSIS if it fails to grant his request because doing so is not within its authority and is unnecessary to removing the money entrusted to the GSIS by its members.

—HAJJI MUNICIPIO,
Vice president,
Public Affairs Office,
Government Service Insurance System,
Financial Center, Pasay City

Unused textbooks: an old problem

THE OCT. 12 EDITORIAL "3,000 textbooks" and the comment of Noel B. Cruz regarding the "P329 million worth of textbooks, state-of-the-art manuals, computers and information technology products lying idle and gathering mold in the warehouse of the Department of Education (DepEd) Office in Region 12 region" were very timely and relevant to everyone.

Timely because of the report on the proposed Cyber Education project, which critics say does not really meet the very basic needs of our school system struggling to upgrade itself and improve the teaching-learning situation. Basic, in the need of the hour, if we are to improve and enhance the quality of Philippine education, is to have enough textbooks and provide the textbooks, instructional materials, classrooms and such other facilities as the textbooks, chairs and so on.

Relevant, because obtaining knowledge from books remains still hailed our impoverished people some more because of misgovernance, graft and corruption.

Therefore, because this matter of instructional materials existing and not existing is, DepEd must have been going on for a long time. Talking from my experience as a former public school supervisor, I can say that many, if not most, of the purchased materials received instructional materials were not really needed for intervention as prescribed for the different grade levels. The DepEd officials concerned ordered and bought these materials not to match to any need or intervention and but to get more commissions and kickbacks from the suppliers.

Another reason was the lack of close supervision on the part of the concerned principals, supervisors, superintendents, division undersecretaries and the secretary himself.

"Don't look at us" said the Department of Education. Passing the buck to the private thing that can happen in managing the

—BENJAMIN S. BAUTISTA,
Information consultant,
Municipality of Pasacao,
Camarines Sur

FARMERS walk for a cause dear to them: land and justice.

Sumilao farmers hunger not only for food but justice

AS APPRECIATIVE JOBY (LETTERS, Nov. 7) article on the Pajanon farmers from Sumilao, Bukidnon, as well as the commendable help and support they received from groups and individuals in Luzon: Visayas, such as Pax Archbishop Jose Palma.

But what is their physical pain and their need for basic needs like food, medicine and a place to sleep, the Sumilao farmers are in dire need of justice. On Oct. 10, 2007, the Office of the President ruled that they have no legal standing to use as they are "illegal occupants/de facto/beneficiaries." The decision was supported by based on Protocols on Customs. The farmers had filed a petition for the revocation of the conversion order and for the immediate coverage of their land in Sumilao under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.)

The irony, they are an indispensable party in the case, after all, they will directly benefit or suffer from any decision on it. More importantly they are saying precisely that the Supreme Court decision affirming the application for conversion was not implemented. The 144-hectare parcel of land remains agricultural a decade after the decision. Neither is Quisumbing failed to indemnify, relief and develop the land as he had promised. Worse, he sold the land on San Miguel Corporation, which has since converted it into a piggery in the heavily irrigated land.

The Haran leg of the "Walk for Familiar Land, Walk for Justice" has not been easy. The weather is either very hot and humid or rainy. There are strenuous rides, too, as the marchers are prone to be used by groups in conflict with each other. Aliason every day, even in those favorite hotel and need to be lifted by fellow marchers in a makeshift carrier made of malong and as luminous guides.

There were occasions where an ambulance had to be requested to bring marchers to a hospital. They are physically exhausted. They need accommodation, medicine, water, and food on a daily basis. They chose to walk from Sumilao to Manila for their cause due to absolute faith in the CARP of the 144-hectare land in question (which remains prime agriculture, at least).

They have walked more than 1,000 kilometers and they are determined to walk the remaining 1,500 kilometers to Mendiola. They have walked with their heads held high and with integrity independence and impartiality for the Gentler. The Book of Proverbs (Proverbs 16:14) a metaphor on sovereignty and reasonable governance when it tells us that "the king's wrath is a matter, but the wise people appease it."

—ATTY. ANTONIO LA VIÑA,
counsel of the Sumilao farmers and executive director of Saint Isidore Labrador and JOSEFO CANCIO, coordinator, Chapter "Walk for Land, Walk for Justice" and executive director, Kalahan Inc.

Wanted: a good person to lead us

THE HARROWING PHILIPPINE REmain apathetic to the viewers. gone is our government is true we can't find one good person to lead us out of our miserable situation.

Both recommend the same problem when God asked him to find a few God-fearing people, as He may have reason to spare their land from destruction. And to God cannot find good things.

Maybe we are in the similarly doomed if we fail to find a leader acceptable to God and to the Filipino people.

—MARCELO FARIÑA,
marcelo_farina@yahoo.com

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Write to the letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager numbers, or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Mayniad report: leaking pipe finally found, fixed

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO MIguilo C. Zapata's letter (Inquirer, 10/25/07) regarding his complaint about the leaking pipe on Aurelio Street, Barangay 712, Zone III in Tangalang, Malate, Manila. We would like to inform him and the public that the leaking pipe has been repaired as of Oct. 24, 2007.

There was a delay in repairing the leak because our technical team had difficulty locating the footage, which included one to be taking interior Arellano Street, not along Aurelio Street, as the complaint reported. This happened after the leak was found, Maricaulo Branch Manila Business Center coordinated with the barangay for the needed excavation permit and sent contractors to fix the pipe. Our contractor completed the job to give him an update on Manila's action regarding his complaints.

We thank Sagun and the Inquirer for bringing this matter to our attention.

—DENNIS MAYNARD SL,
assistant vice president,
Corporate Affairs
and Media Relations,
Manila Water Service Inc.,
Corporate Center,
Katipunan Road, Balara, QC

How to choose election commissioners

COMMENTARY

Alexa V. Sarmiento

COMELEC'S 3, 2008, ACTING CHAIRperson J. Barin and Commissioner Resurrection Z. Borra is still in existing after serving their terms of seven years. Supposedly Borra finish her commission on that date if former Chair Benjamin S. Abalos Sr., who resigned on Dec. 1, 2007. With the vacancy left by former Commissioner Mehol K. Sadain filled up by the ad interim appointments of President Judge Macalintal. The Commission there will be three vacancies in the Commission on Elections on Feb. 2.

The 1987 Constitution prescribes the qualifications for appointees to the Commission and. They are: (a) natural-born citizens of the Philippines; (b) at the time of appointment, at least 35 years of age; (c) holders of college degree; (d) must not have been candidates for any elective position in the immediately preceding elections; (e) a majority of the commissioners, including the chair, shall be members of the Philippine Bar who have been engaged in the practice of law for at least 10 years.

Empowered to appoint the chair and the commissioners is none other than the Philippines without appointees have to be confirmed by the Commission on Appointments of the Congress of the Philippines as part of check and balance under the objective separation of powers. If appointments is given by the President, the Congress is to review the appointments is to the favor of ad interim designation, subject to confirmation by the Commission on Appointments when Congress initiates session.

The Comelec, with its various members, is a superbody. Under the 1987 Constitution, it enjoys exclusive, judicial and legislative functions. (Sec. 2, Article IX, 1987 Constitution) it has (1) additional powers and functions under the Omnibus Election Code (Batas Pambansa Blg. 881). Comelec's mandate is an effective enforcer and administrator of all laws relative to the conduct of elections. It has a total of 15 powers and functions under the Constitution and law.

It is because of the constitutional and statutory powers that make the Comelec an important and crucial factor in the holding of clean and credible elections, in the free choice of elective officials from the President up to barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan officials. An honest and independent Comelec exists in manner that the Constitution and law, solely devoted to uphold the people's sovereignty will, is beyond question essential in realizing the solid edifice of constitutional democracy and strengthening the people's trust in government.

Considering the Comelec's critical role in the democratic choice of our leaders from the national to the village levels, where should the chair and commissioners be chosen from? And how should they be chosen?

In Metaphilippia, nominees to the electoral management body (EMB) are in many cases eminent members of the community culled from members of the political parties which participate in elections and from the classes of nonpartisanship and independence. In Utopia, nominees are all judges or eminent legal practitioners. In Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Thailand and Ukraine, members of the EMBs are either elected public figures or renowned for political neutrality with expertise in fields such as law, public administration, political science or the media. The law in many of these countries provides that EMB members name and have been active in party politics in the recent past, and must not be a political party member while serving as a member of the EMB. In Core d' Ivoire, the EMB is composed of judges, academics, civil society representatives and one each from political parties.

The process of appointment in most countries is participatory and transparent. In South Africa and Namibia, members of the EMBs are screened through open advertisement, public nomination and short listing. Secretly to be considered for appointment. In South Africa, they may also be nominated by the public. Applicants are screened and screened through public interviews by an independent body (for example, a judicial selection committee in Namibia and a committee of the legislature in the case of South Africa). The lists of short-listed candidates are submitted to the head of State for final appointment. In Burkina Faso and Guatemala, civil society organizations, academics of the legal profession play a key role in the EMB appointment.

In the Philippines, without departing from the long-observed constitutional practice of the President appointing the chair and the commissioners and subjecting the appointments to legislative confirmation, the present ad appointments can be made more transparent and participative. This can be done by the Search Committee of the Office of the President publicly announcing in print or broadcast that the nominations coming from incumbent sectors and disciplines (preferably from the academe, education, management and IT sectors) are now open and the same can now be submitted to it. After the submission of names, the list will be publicized in the newspapers or in the judiciary and this may the same process that was followed for appointments to the Constitutional Commission of 1986 that drafted the 1987 Constitution. Interviews, at least in the case of the chair, and the President can now make her appointments. If appointments by the President are objectionable, the public can still object by participating in the deliberations of the Committee on Appointments.

The President will have a living and lasting legacy to the people and to the Republic she has long served if she makes good appointments to the Comelec. May God be her guide and the common good be her policeny when she chooses the men and women with integrity, independence and impartiality for the Comelec. The Book of Proverbs (Proverbs 16:14) a metaphor on sovereignty and reasonable governance when it tells us that "the king's wrath is a matter, but the wise people appease it."

Rene V. Sarmiento is a Comelec commissioner.

WESTERN Police District Director Roberto Rosales holds up police artist's sketch of the gunman in Saturday night's killing of Comelec law department chief Alioden Dakoja in Ermita, Manila. INQUIRER

Fertilization of Sulu Sea opposed

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS yesterday condemned an Australian company's plan to dump hundreds of tons of fertilizer into Philippine waters as part of an experiment to combat climate change.

The groups, including Greenpeace and civil society organizations, called on the Philippine government to stop the experiment, known as "ocean fertilization."

"This is not a solution and is a dangerous diversion from the real solutions to address climate change," said Jasper Inventor, Greenpeace climate and energy campaigner.

"It is also extremely irresponsible to test a speculative and expensive method, which potentially has high impacts to the environment."

Sydney-based Ocean Nourishment Corp. is said to be planning to pump up to 1,000 tons of nitrogen-rich urea into the Sulu Sea, where it has already dumped one ton of the substance.

The company has said urea stimulates the growth of phytoplankton in the sea and can absorb large quantities of carbon dioxide—the main cause of global warming—from the atmosphere.

It also said the growth of more phytoplankton would help boost fishing stocks.

But literature said the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has noted that ocean fertilization "remains largely speculative" and "many environmental side effects have yet to be assessed."

The Sulu Sea between Palawan to the west and Mindanao is home to the Tubbataha Reefs Marine Park. AFP

Police release sketch of poll official's killer

From page A1

ner Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales described him as a dark-skinned man in fatigue pants and a black jacket, and wearing a cap.

He is said to be between 30 and 40 years old, the man stands between 5'5" and 5'6", was armed with a .45-cal. pistol and had a companion with him when he shot the chief of the law department of the Commission on Elections on Saturday night in Manila's Ermita district.

The gunman reportedly fled toward Roxas Boulevard after the shooting.

"This information was based on the confirmation statements of eyewitnesses," Rosales said. "They may help us trace who were with Dakoja before he was killed. We are now getting their statements but we cannot divulge the contents of these statements for now."

No premature disclosures

Initial claims by some politicians that politics might have been behind the killing, Mayor Lim warned against "premature disclosures" of leads being pursued by investigators.

"That's what Rosales and I talked about a while ago. No premature disclosures that could give color to the investigation," Lim told reporters. "They should just wait for the case and media fair trade people, because if they have to dwell, I'll have to die."

The screening jog order has stopped investigators from talking about what the probe has yielded so far.

Lim said investigators would talk to the media once they had obtained concrete leads and "found witnesses who can shed light" on the case.

"That's the time for them to present (their findings) to the media, once they have obtained statements and arrested the person," Lim added, in Filipino.

Help of Hyatt sought

Lim stressed he would not set a deadline for the police to finish the investigation to avoid pressuring them into "just grabbing anyone" who would admit involvement.

"We don't like that," he said.

He said the Hyatt Hotel management should cooperate in the probe.

Dakoja was shot near the Tuason and Sinagtala inn and then hoped the hotel management would allow them to use video footage from a closed circuit television which might yield more clues to the shooting.

"For purposes of public investigation," Lim said, "Even if the incident happened outside the hotel, their equipment may have value to one of the area. They should be cited as witnesses for participating in the cover up of a crime if they still refuse to cooperate in the investigation."

A familiar face

Chief Insp. Alejandro Yaneza Jr., head of the MPD homicide division, earlier said investigators were having difficulty assessing the video footage and getting in the public eye for whom Dakoja was believed to have had a date.

Dropping also said a Philippine Savings Corp. employee told him the Marmar City native was a familiar face in the casinos.

Investigators said Dakoja was carrying at least P300,000 when he was shot.

Former Philippine Ambassador Roy Señores volunteered a possible angle to the killing.

Nicolas Imbuen Dakoja was killed, Señores said the poll official had agreed to testify against a faction of the Bohay party-list group headed by the son of El Shaddai leader Mike Velarde.

"He was supposed

Across the NATION

COA report: Asean projects irregular

By Jaime R. Balanticat
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—THE COMMISSION ON AUDIT (COA) found several deficiencies in the implementation of the projects for the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit.

The COA report on the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) project, which included findings on house-related projects, was praised on the commission's website and did not indicate when it made the audit and came up with the findings.

No bidding

COA, in its audit report, noticed that 156 projects worth more than P1.3 billion, as part of the preparations for the 12th Asean summit, were implemented through alternative methods of procurement, instead of through a public bidding.

Under Section 10 of Republic Act No. 9184 (Government Procurement Act), all government procurements should be done through competitive bidding except those provided for in Article 16 of the Act where negotiated procurements are allowed under certain conditions.

In a memorandum dated June 25, 2006, Public Works Secretary Hermogenes E. Ebdane Jr. authorized the implementation of the projects through negotiated procurement, stating as a reason the lack of time to prepare for the Asean summit.

Refund

COA noted that the proximity of the scheduled activity could not be invoked since there was no state crisis or natural calamity which occurred to require the bending of the rules to prevent loss of lives and properties.

In addition, the schedule and venue of the 12th Asean summit were known during the 11th Asean Summit since bids were agreed upon by the member nations, the COA report pointed out.

COA said 63 projects, worth P566 million, were implemented without appropriation funding and pre-bid/bid conferences, a violation of the law.

The agency also confirmed that the P54.9 million worth of unit cost of street lamps installed in the cities of Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu were bloated, resulting in P31.5 million loss to the government.

The COA directed the DPWH to demand the refund of the P569 million from Canopla Construction and Development Inc., the company that installed the street lamps.

If DPWH fail to do so, all those involved in the procurement process would be held liable for the amount involved, COA added.

Mare scams

The COA also found that 36 of DPWH regular maintenance projects, costing P168.1 million that were located outside the venues of the summit, were included in the list of Asean-related projects and implemented through negotiated procurement.

Several rehabilitations and repair works costing P80.3 million were implemented in private lands, resulting in the unsolicited use of government funds, COA added.

RISK TAKER
An unidentified family isolated on building a house on the dredged portion of Barangay Padung in Lugaz pi City that was all but wiped out by lahar and volcanic mudflows from Mayon volcano that heavy rains washed down on the height of Saguinyahoon "Running" last year.

Pampanga town ends extended 'undas' rites

By Tonnee Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CRACIA, PAMPANGA—LIKE THEIR IGA barots woodcarving pieces and grandiose church, Catholics in Bacolor's Betis have never been dead to the fullest.

Daily on Saturday, the All Souls' Day, a tradition not known practiced elsewhere in the country, says Pampanga Bishop Pablo Virgilio David, a native of Betis.

The observance began on Nov. 1, an observation that they share with the rest of Filipino Catholics who observed All Saints' Day on All Souls' Day that, in the Roman Catholic calendar, is reserved every first day of November.

Tradition

"Magpinsan mi ku (We grew up on this tradition)," says Benito Sangalang, 73, when asked how the ritual came about.

Every afternoon, from Nov. 1 to 8, Sangalang had lighted candles, offered flowers and recited the Holy Rosary before the tombs of his relatives buried at the Betis Catholic Cemetery.

Sangalang had done that without fail even if old age and arthritis had made her legs wobbly.

"Ala ngeni, diu bakas. (It's my time to go now, it will be your turn tomorrow)," is the epigram inscribed on the two gates of this cemetery.

Buried there by Mt. Pinatubo's lahar since 1991, the cemetery had not ceased being an axe by the barely ceramics and deeply religious people of Betis, one of Pampanga's ancient towns until it was annexed to Guagua in 1994.

Happy place

Most of the 2,000 graves here were not barbers on Friday night. Families gathered, saying prayers in unison and tending candles as the hours went by, a family ushered to immolation with celebration instead.

"Pag-quyan (rainy day feast)," is how Benito, 63, calls the tradition that dictates the homecoming for grandparents.

Her daughter, Lina, says the tradition is "difficult" to observe among residents who work daily out of the village. They cope by asking relatives to do the ritual on their behalf.

Priests had taken turns celebrating Mass or at the cemetery every 6 p.m.

Because that was the practice, the Betis diocese of San Fernando had allowed the construction of a chapel in the cemetery, next to the Santiago de Galicia (St. James) Parish in less than 300 meters across it.

The chapel, built three meters from the ground, juts in the middle of a landscape of tombs, some dating as far back as 1860.

To conclude the feast on Saturday, Fr. Emil Orion celebrated Mass at the church at 8 a.m. An hour later, he led the procession to the cemetery where he blessed the tombs with holy water.

Unique practice

Few Betisin is amazed at this tradition. For Betis is not just one town a week ago.

"[The] Betis tradition is unique. Families may opt for a novena for the dead but that's usually held nine days before All Souls' Day, not after, and done in church," says David.

"Only Betis residents go daily to the cemetery for nine afternoons with flowers and candles. It must be a tradition that goes back to Spanish times," he adds.

Eric Eddie Panlilio, a parish priest of Betis for seven years until he took a leave to run for public office in March, says no archival documents at the archdiocese's museum in the City of San Fernando explain the root of the Betis rites.

"I believe it's a result of tradition. The people are 'honoring' every religious and they breed their family dispersed so much," he says.

Archival records showed that Augustinian friars began the Catholic mission here in 1572 through Fray Fernando Pinto.

The Betis (book), however, lists Fray Moreno Peralta at its first parocco (parish priest), Fray Jose de Jesus holds the most church.

The place is named after the Betis tree, a type of hardwood that is rare nowadays.

"Early friars describe the faithful of Betis as the most pious and industrious people in the whole province, not to mention that Betis is said to have produced the most numbers of priests not only in Pampanga but in the entire country," according to Augustinian researcher, Fray Fernando Monro.

Betis and its neighboring areas of Bacolor (to the east) and Lubao (to the west) are among the ancient towns of Pampanga.

Evolution

Betis, originally a fishing and farming village of 700 people, developed into a town of artisans that specialized in making images of saints and furniture.

Its church has preserved the paintings of Simon Flores as well as ornate retablo (altarpiece) where scene of saints are displayed), chandeliers, windows and doors by unknown artisans. In its yard is preserved what is said to be the cemetery's first deep well.

The National Museum had declared the church in Betis as a national cultural treasure in the early 1980s.

'BAKU NGENI. Ala bakas (It's my turn to go now, it's your turn tomorrow)," says this reminder at the gates of the Betis Catholic Cemetery in Cracia, Pampanga where the feast for 'the dead is observed for nine days.

Worm in seafood kills dozens in Zambo villages

MAPAN, ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR—Health officials confirmed the capillariasis outbreak in several villages of this town where more than 70 people, including children, have reportedly died.

Dr. Raymund Nadela, municipal health officer, expressed alarm over the health situation in some villages, saying that the capillaria worm (Capillaria philippinensis) could "become uncontrolled."

Based on random tests of stools from 326 residents in the area, 91 people have been found positive for the disease, Nadela said.

Emeliano Villalon, chair of Barangay Mayo, said that more or less viewed last October, a total of 31 adults and nine children have died of capillariasis.

Villalon said 20 others died from April to August.

But Nadela said he could not "outrightly say those who died earlier were confirmed to have capillariasis."

"We labeled them as deaths with suspected capillariasis," he said.

Nadela said the victims got the disease from eating freshwater fish and shrimps from the marshy rivers of Mapan.

"Those shrimps and fish are carrying this type of worm known as capillaria, a microscopic worm that gets into the intestines and eats up all the nutrition of the person," he said.

Maria Teresita dela Cruz, information officer of the Department of Health in Western Mindanao, said some people in the province "love to eat *kinilaw* and there's a particular fish from the river which they love to eat raw with vinegar."

Dela Cruz said other than Mayan town, the health department received the same report in the village of Pitogo in Bacungan town.

"But we don't have clear records as of this moment," she said.

Virgilio Lamoran, 43, a farmer of Mayo village, survived capillariasis but still complained of diarrhea.

Nadela said patients found with capillaria worms showed symptoms like diarrhea, extreme abdominal pain that leads to anemia, and muscle wasting.

"People think that they had gas pains, but the pain becomes excruciating coupled with gurgling sound, then the patient could hardly eat or sleep," Nadela explained.

Mayan Mayor Wilfredo Bacalso said he became alarmed by the devastating health crisis that "when I keep on signing for approved request letters and solicitations for caskets."

Since October, Bacalso said, he had granted the release of funds for the purchase of 32 coffins intended for the villages of Mayo, Dimapnit, Poblacion (capt., Pobyo, Balimbisan and Baloc.

The outbreak and the fatalities, according to Nadela, is Mayo village where Jasmine said, a total 24 coffins were delivered last month.

Nadela said that aside from capillariasis, the town was now free of the presence of lymphatic filariasis or elephantiasis, an abnormal growth of the lymphatic nodes due to a mosquito-borne disease that attacks the blood, and leprosy.

Although the cases of filariasis and leprosy have been taken care of since two years ago, Nadela still considers the diseases serious in some villages of Mayan. — Ador S. Alipuda, *Inquirer Mindanao*, with *Inquirer Research*

EXPENSIVE BICYCLE LANE

Children ride their bicycles on the multimillion-peso Pasig Patricio Bridge, one of the components of the P27-billion Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway that has not been completed by its Japanese contractors. The SCTEx opening was moved to March 2008.

DPWH told to finish ₱2-B, 100-km Samar road project

By Vicente S. Labro
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered the Department of Public Works and Highways to finish a P2-billion road project in Northern Samar by 2010.

Lourdino Sosa Jr., DPWH assistant regional director, said the President made the order on Friday shortly after she made an aerial inspection and attended a briefing on the status of some road projects in Samar.

Sosa said the construction of the road from Palapag town in Northern Samar to Arteche and San Policarpo town in Eastern Samar, with a total length of more than 100 km, was scheduled to be completed by 2012 "as programmed," but the President wanted the project to be finished ahead her term ends in 2010.

More funds

He said the President had directed the DPWH to look into the budget of the project and to see if it was possible to "squeeze in" more funds in 2008 and 2009 so the project could be completed by 2010.

He disclosed that the President, who appeared dissatisfied with the accomplishment of the 52nd Engineer Brigade in the implementation of the Lapinig-Jipapad road project, was included to have the DPWH undertake the project.

The Lapinig-Jipapad road aims to link Northern Samar and Eastern Samar. The 5.2-km road work, which has a project cost of P58 million, is being funded out of the President's Social Fund.

The areas where the proposed road would pass through were once rebel-influenced, prompting the government to put up a road network as part of its peace-building effort in Eastern Visayas.

The completion of the road projects is seen as vital for the economic development of Eastern Samar and Northern Samar to wood also make Samar the country's third largest island, accessible by land travel through an inter-provincial circumferential road that also covers Samar to the west.

In Samar province, the government implemented roadway last year was big road rehabilitation projects.

These include the P1.4-billion Gallapog-Gamay-ih Road and the P1.3-billion Catarman-Calbiga Road.

Acacia trees on Agusan road mangled

Protests swamp DPWH over uncoordinated cutting

SAN FRANCISCO, Agusan del Sur—They cut off the main branches of 15-year-old acacia trees planted on both sides of the national highway so they won't be too public schools here, bring the canopy shade that brings fresh air to school children and passers-by a gain.

But what the workers of the Department of Public Works and Highways did to the kilometer-long row of trees sparked a public outcry in this town.

Residents are upset at not being consulted on the matter.

Residents are upset at not being consulted on the matter. Others say the trees should have been left alone to provide shade to motorists and pedestrians.

A PILE photo from Dale Agusan showing a beautiful scene of a row of trees across the national highway near the public schools in San Francisco, Agusan del Sur. This scene is gone after the DPWH cut those trees.

The public outcry has prompted the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Council to discuss the issue in its main agenda in a meeting on Wednesday at the Sangguniang Bayan session hall.

No coordination

Alejandro Bales, community relations officer, said the DPWH should have first coordinated with his office before cutting off the tree branches for them to be guided which part of the branches should be trimmed without sacrificing the shade.

She lamented how the branches were haphazardly cut. Protruding, broken portions of the branches could invite parasites and eventually kill the trees, she said.

The DPWH engineers admitted their mistake and gave assurances that they would take corrective measures. But they insisted that the branches must go in order to ease traffic safety.

Bernal said his agency was instructed to clear all traffic hazards, including trees within the road rights of way.

He defended the move to cut the tree branches by disallowing his detractors during the meeting to choose between beauty and public safety. He said in his presentation that for their engineers, they would prefer 100-percent public safety and fit-percent beauty.

Bales claimed 75 percent of those planted have survived, but Dr. Lim, who was apparently not convinced, insisted an inventory of the planted trees jointly conducted by the government and private sector. Elvis T. Pascandian, Inquirer Mindanao

> "While the DENR is encouraging people to plant more trees...here we have DPWH men who cut them..."

Other civic groups, like the Rotary Club of San Francisco, have aired their disgust.

Local reporters joined the growing protest as they took turns in lambasting DPWH district engineer Jimmy Bernal and his assistant, Rocky Calusinan, on public affairs programs, newspaper columns and on the broadcast broadcast of "EDP Hour" program on Tuesday.

A video documentary titled "Unsay Sala sa Olga Kalsay? (What have the trees done wrong?)" showing before and after scenes has been posted in the YouTube.

RECENTLY ISSUED REGULATIONS AMENDING THE TIME OF PAYMENT OF MCIT AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Recently, the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) issued Revenue Regulations No. (RR) 13-2007 which amended Section 2.27(E) of RR 9-98, the regulations relating to the imposition of minimum corporate income tax (MCIT) on domestic and resident foreign corporations. The amendatory provisions were intended to align the payment of MCIT with the quarterly payments of corporate normal income tax pursuant to Sections 75 and 77 of the 1997 Tax Code, as amended, as well as to clarify further the definition of gross income for purposes of computing the tax base of the 2% MCIT.

Thus, in the filing and payment of the quarterly corporate income tax after the effectivity of RR 13-2007, the following shall be observed:

- The computation and the payment of 2% MCIT based on gross income shall likewise apply at the time of filing of quarterly corporate income tax as prescribed under Sections 75 and 77 of the 1997 Tax Code, as amended.
- Gross income subject to the 2% MCIT, as defined in RR 13-2007, likewise includes other items of gross income realized or earned by the taxpayer apart from the income derived from core business activities during the taxable period which are subject to the normal corporate income tax. This means that the same includes all items of gross income enumerated under Section 32(A) of the 1997 Tax Code, as amended, except income exempt from income tax and income subject to final tax.
- If, in the computation of the tax due for the taxable quarter, the computed quarterly MCIT due appears to be higher than the computed quarterly corporate normal income tax, the quarterly corporate income tax to be paid shall be the MCIT. Excess MCIT from prior taxable years shall not be allowed to be credited, while the following may be applied against the quarterly MCIT due:
  - Expanded withholding tax in the current and prior years
  - Quarterly corporate income tax payments under normal income tax paid in the previous taxable quarter/s of the current taxable year
  - Quarterly MCIT paid in the previous taxable quarter/s of the current taxable year
- If in the computation of the tax due for the taxable quarter, the computed quarterly normal income tax due appears to be higher than the computed quarter MCIT due, then quarterly corporate income tax to be paid shall be the corporate normal income tax. In the payment thereof, the following may be applied in order to get the net corporate normal income tax payable for the quarter:
  - Excess MCIT from prior taxable years
  - Expanded withholding tax in the current and prior years
  - Quarterly corporate income tax payments under normal income tax paid in the previous taxable quarter/s of current taxable year
  - Quarterly MCIT paid in the previous taxable quarter/s of the current taxable year
- The above same rules shall apply in the annualized computation of corporate income tax at the end of the taxable year.

Nonetheless, as provided by Sec. 3 of the transitory provisions of RR 13-2007, in the filing of the quarterly income tax for the taxable quarter which is due for filing after the effectivity of said Regulations, the computation of the MCIT for the transitory quarter following the effectivity of the Regulations, shall be done on a cumulative basis covering not only the current taxable quarter but also the previous taxable quarters of the same taxable year. Thus, for 3rd quarter ending September 2007 which is due for filing on or before November 15, 2007, the 1st and 2nd quarters' gross income shall be added to the gross income for the 3rd quarter ending September 2007 in order to get the cumulative gross income subject to the 2% MCIT which shall then be computed with the cumulative corporate income tax computed under the normal income tax. Whichever is the higher between the two shall be the basis of the tax due for said transitory quarter.

Dear Colleagues:

It is my pleasure to invite you to attend the 2007 National Assembly for Diabetes Educators on November 19, 2007 at the Century Park Hotel. Our theme for this year is: New Therapies Redesigning Diabetes Treatment.

Years ago, when a person was diagnosed with diabetes, it meant early death from cardiovascular disease often preceded by loss of limb, blindness or kidney failure. But thankfully, those days are over. There have been many new advances in treatment and technology that have made it possible for people with diabetes to live long, productive lives.

Our vision for this year's national assembly is to update our diabetes educators with the latest in these medical advances, while bringing them together for better networking and interaction.

A number of new therapies based on the biological actions of the incretin hormones (GLP-1 and GIP) have been developed. Many of these compounds improve glucose tolerance, lower A1C levels, prevent weight gain and increase beta-cell mass in preclinical experiments. There are two types of incretin based drugs available – incretin mimetics and incretin enhancer (DPP-IV inhibitor).

New formulations of insulin have likewise become available. They have been designed to offer the advantages of simpler regimens and better glucose control with less risk of hypoglycemia and weight gain. All are human insulin analogs derived from recombinant DNA technology.

During this year's National Assembly, we shall also be inducting our new fellows to the Philippine College of Diabetes Educators as well as our new Associate Diabetes Educators. We will also be launching our Diabetes Center Teaching Aids, which will thereafter be distributed to our satellite clinics all over the country for use in diabetes education.

Please join us at the 2007 National Assembly of Diabetes Educators as we together we can work towards improved diabetes care for the Filipino patient.

Dr. Augusto D. Litonjua
President
The Diabetes Center Philippines

Philippine Center for Diabetes Education Foundation, Inc.

2007 National Assembly for Diabetes Educators
November 19, 2007
Century Park Hotel, Manila

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PROGRAMME

7:30-8:45	**REGISTRATION**	
8:45	Opening	Emcee: Dr. Carol N. Martinez
	National Anthem	Dr. Cecerin Montano
	Invocation	
	Welcome Remarks	Dr. Augusto D. Litonjua
9:00-10:00	Plenary Session	Chair : Dr. Ysolde Amante
	"Understanding the Glucoregulatory Roles of Incretin Hormones" **Speaker: Dr. Augusto D. Litonjua**	
10:00-10:30	Message from Philippine College of Diabetes Educators	Dr. Tommy Ty Willing
	Induction of new Associate Diabetes Educators	Dr. Augusto D. Litonjua Dr. Joy C. Fontanilla
	Induction of new Fellows, Philippine College of Diabetes Educators	Dr. Augusto D. Litonjua Dr. Tommy Ty Willing
10:30-11:00	Opening of Exhibits/Coffee Break	Dr. Augusto D. Litonjua Dr. Cynthia R. Manalac
11:00-12:00	Symposium I: Incretin-based Therapies	Chair: Dr. Susan Yu-Gan
11:00-11:20	"Enhancing the Incretin Effect with DPP-4 Inhibitors" Speaker: Dr. Maria Hanalina S. Gomez	
11:20-12:00	"Mimicking the Incretin Effect: Exenatide and Other Incretin Analogs" Speaker: Dr. Joy C. Fontanilla	
12:00-12:20	Open Forum	
12:20-2:00	LUNCH SYMPOSIUM	
	"ADVANCE in Diabetes and Vascular Disease Management" **Speaker: Dr. Augusto D. Litonjua**	
2:00-2:30	VISIT EXHIBITS	
2:30-4:00	Novel Insulins	Chair: Dr. Gus Waremar
2:30-3:15	"Insulin Analogues: Transforming Traditional Care" Speaker: Dr. Cynthia H. Manalac	
3:15-3:50	"Inhaled Insulin: A Practical Perspective" Speaker: Dr. Rina Tan	
3:50-4:00	Open Forum	

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Editor Peter C. Oliquenyd

DID YOU KNOW

THE 150,000-sq m Glorietta mall in Makati City is one of several Ayala malls in Metro Manila. The others are Greenbelt in Makati, Alabang Town Center in Muntinlupa, Marikiti Market in Taguig and Trinoma in Quezon City.

Glorietta, which offers shopping and dining options, also an indoor playground and activity center, was declared Shopping Center of the Year in 2001 and 2004 by the Philippine Retailers Association and the Department of Trade and Industry. On Oct. 19, the mall was marked by an explosion which killed 11 persons. The incident is still under investigation. *Cyril C. Bonalenta Inquirer Research*

CA confirms double murder conviction

But downgrades sentence of 2 men found guilty of trader, driver's slay

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR
The tree-lined Sunken Garden provides a pleasant place where joggers on the University of the Philippines Diliman campus can catch their breath after a run. JOAN LANDICHO

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS AFFIRMED the double murder conviction of two alleged members of the Alex Boncayao Brigade for the killing of a Bataan Peninsula businessman and his driver 12 years ago.

The appellate court, however, in its Dec. 20 decision, downgraded the death sentence handed down by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court on the two convicted men to indivisible perpetual reclusion due possibility of parole. President Macapagal-Arroyo has also abolished the death penalty.

The suspects—Rogerio Lopez Jr. and Orlando Bandalan Jr.—were ordered by the trial court to pay the heirs of businessman Ty Al, a businessman and his driver, Nestor Encarnacion, more than P1.75 million in damages.

Ty and Encarnacion were ambushed by six armed men on Dec. 11, 1995, at the corner of Tandang Sora and Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City.

Lopez and Bandalan had contested their conviction, saying the prosecution's witness was false and unbelievable because of contradictions, and that their guilt had not been proven beyond reasonable doubt.

They also claimed that they were not properly identified as the assailants, adding that the witness, Dr. Ira Villanueva, had said in her affidavit that she could not remember the faces of the men who attacked the victims. They said that the police officer was only upon the prodding of the police.

According to Bandalan, he was arrested because he was a member of the cause-oriented group, Kongreso ng Pagbabalon ng Mandirigang Lumad.

But in upholding the two men's conviction for murder, the appellate court said Villanueva had explained the apparent inconsistency in her testimony by saying that she did not have an opportunity to read her affidavit because of many people were asking her questions at that time.

It added that Villanueva's identification of the suspects outside the court room was valid, saying the witness was shown the pictures of eight persons, including those of the two suspects.

"Nothing in the record would show that the police merely suggested the accused/appellants' identities to Irma," the court said.

The appellate court noted that the witness' identification of the suspects through pictures and videotapes took place only after the ambush and that Villanueva was only five meters away from the suspects when they shot Ty and Encarnacion in broad daylight. She also had no ill motive for making false statements against Lopez and Bandalan, it added.

"From a reasoning ex-parte that the accused-appellants' out-of-court identifications were tainted with irregularities, Irma's subsequent identifications of them in court cured any flaw that may have surrounded it," the court said.

Villanueva had testified that she was in a jeepney when three men boarded the vehicle and told the driver to follow a blue Mercedes Benz. She also saw three men in front of a nearby small store while the vehicles were stalled in traffic.

The witness said Lopez was standing near the store while Bandalan was seated nearby. She then saw the two, plus a third man, walk toward the car carrying firearms and fire at Ty and the driver at close range. She also saw that the car's passengers were dead, they shouted "Mabuhay ang ABB! Long live the ABB!." The men then escaped on board another jeepney.

Driver who rammed vehicle into funeral march faces raps

By Kristine L. Alave

THE MARIKINA CITY POLICE YESTERDAY filed criminal charges in the prosecutor's office against the driver of a vehicle which plowed into a funeral procession on Sunday killing three people and injuring 11 more.

Supt. Romeo Ramos, chief of the city police, said they charged Gerardo Fernando, 41, and a passenger residing in Antipolo City with reckless imprudence resulting in multiple homicide, multiple physical injuries and damage to property.

Fernando could also be charged with drunk driving after he tested positive for alcohol.

Ramos added that he would ask the Land Transportation Office to revoke Fernando's license, saying it was one of the main causal and grievous road mishaps he has seen.

According to the police officer, Fernando admitted that he drank alcohol before leaving his house in Antipolo City on board a Suzuki Wagon.

On his way to Bitanka, Fernando fell asleep behind the wheel and drove into a group of mourners on Marcos Highway.

Ramos said the suspect only woke up when he heard people banging on the side of his vehicle.

Three people who were part of the procession were killed in the incident.

Jay Caninsio, 34, was killed on the spot, while two women identified as Mary Joy Ocillos, 38, and Rosalie Rodriguez, 48, died while undergoing treatment. Police said 11 more were being treated in different hospitals for injuries.

Robbers strike in Las Piñas, snatch ₱8M from armored van

By Julie M. Aurelio

SEVEN ARMED MEN TOOK P800,000 in cash from a Banco de Oro armored van parked near the convenience store of a gas station on J. Aguilar Avenue, Barangay CAA, Las Piñas City yesterday morning.

Two men were injured as the suspects mauled guardsmen with security guards of a Shell gasoline station.

They were identified as Noel Mata, the van's security escort, and Joseph Nuevas, a Banco de Oro teller. Both were rushed to the Las Piñas Doctors Hospital for treatment and remain under observation as present time.

An initial investigation showed that the incident happened at 11:45 a.m. as the victims were collecting money from the 24-hour convenience store.

Store personnel were loading two green bags containing P800,000 in cash into the van when one of the suspects, who pretended to be store customer, announced the holdup, according to PO2 Teresito Bautista.

The suspects ordered everyone to lie face down on the ground, then shot Mata and Nuevas twice before fleeing with the money on board a white Toyota Corolla with plate number DA-277 and two motorcycles.

The car was later recovered on Liwasang St., San Antonio Village in Barangay CAA.

Another vehicle, a black Hyundai van with plate number EGS-619, and three other motorcycles served as backup vehicles of the Corolla, police said.

The vehicles headed toward Sucat, Parañaque City.

Senior Insp. Jacinto Ailit, head of the criminal investigation section of the Las Piñas City police, said they were still conducting a follow-up investigation to determine which group was behind the robbery.

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P 8,000	next 2 years	P 8,000	next 2 years
P 11,000	next 2 years	P 9,000	next 2 years
P 13,600	Remaining 11 years	P 12,500	Remaining 16 years

*Computation is based on a P1,000,000 loan amount on a fixed 20-year term

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Death threats on Makati mayor's breakfast menu

By CJ Yap

ON HIS 60TH BIRTHDAY LAST Sunday, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay woke up to death threats, instead of birthday greetings.

He received the threats which were sent through text messages by a man who identified himself as "Kia Bolos," the mayor's security officer told the police yesterday.

Sherwin Iñumerg reported to the police that he has received several incoming messages early Sunday morning from an unidentified person who was using the cell phone number 0920-4129955.

Some of the messages, in Filipino, read: "It's your end. You will be judged for your shamelessness. Don't try Ke Obida. I love her very much, Ke Bolos."

Other messages warned Binay to "be careful," said Senior Insp. Sherwin Iñumerg, chief of the Makati police intelligence and investigation section. The messages were sent from 1:00 a.m. to 10:37 a.m., based on the phone log book.

Iñumerg said the mayor had already received several other messages in the past few days, but decided to report it only yesterday as the messages came one after the other.

Makati police chief, Supt. Gilbert Cruz, said they had determined that the number was a prepaid line, but as of yesterday it was already unreachable.

Mayors said that with this development, the mayor's security would be beefed up. "We are in close coordination with the mayor's security people," the police official said.

Asked if they believe that the text messages came from members of the recommended Strat People's Army, based on the "Kia" tag, Mayora said they were not ruling out any possibilities.

THE EYES HAVE IT
A fact-food outlet along Magsaysay Street in UP Village, Quezon City offers an eye-catching menu.

Pasay City barangay polls winners sworn in

By Julie M. Aurelio

AFTER WINNING IN THE OCT. 29 barangay elections, 198 newly elected barangay chairmen were sworn in by Pasay City Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad yesterday morning.

However, the city government and the local Commission on Elections have yet to resolve issues on the declaration of a failure of elections in Barangay 76 following reports of ballot-snatching.

"I will meet with the remaining candidates of Barangay 76 to resolve the issue," Trinidad said in a phone interview.

Based on reports, supporters of a candidate allegedly tried to seize ballot boxes and paraphernalia from several polling precincts in the barangay, prompting election officer Antoinette Jovinas to declare a failure of elections.

After the oath-taking, Trinidad asked the new barangay leaders to work hand in eradicating illegal drugs and increasing educational opportunities for their residents.

"Let us work together to ensure safe, orderly and honest, guide for more educational opportunities and weed out illegal drugs," the mayor said.

Pasay City has 201 barangays but only 198 chairmen took their oath before Trinidad after the flag-raising ceremony yesterday.

"We also ask our local leaders to actively enforce the curfew for minors and be friendly to their constituents. And also, proper garbage management and disposal," Trinidad said.

The mayor recently ordered a renewed cleanup drive in the city after a three-month-old baby was blown by rats in a house in the city.

The oath-taking was also attended by Pasay City Rep. Lito Bonoa, Vice Mayor Jesusrino Estrella and city hall employees.

Businessman in Pasig road rage incident nabbed

By Kristine L. Alave

POLICE ARRESTED A businessman after he allegedly shot a bus truck driver following a traffic altercation in Pasig City yesterday morning.

Pasig City police chief, Senior Supt. Frank Uyami, said the suspect was identified as Aaron Lizano, 35, and a businessman residing in Barangay Ilog in Lipa, Quezon City.

Lizano was accused of firing at Agusto Gonzales, 27, a driver of JMB Trucking Co., Uyami said, adding that the incident was a case of road rage.

The report said Lizano, who was driving an Isuzu Crosswind (UEB 387) was irked at Gonzales, who was on board a tow truck (TMM 748), after they collided on C-5 Avenue in Barangay Bagong Ilog, Pasig City at 9:20 a.m.

According to Gonzales' statements, Lizano got out of his vehicle and aimed at him once with a cal. .38 firearm, hitting his side injury.

The driver was unharmed and immediately reported the incident to the police who chased Lizano after he repeatedly tried to leave the scene.

"SENATORS AT WORK"
Senate President Manny Villar cuts the ribbon during the opening of the Senate Press Photographers Association's photo exhibit titled "Senators at Work for the People." Flanking him are (from left) Lutz Glorioso of Manila Bulletin; Benny Valin, Malaya; Ruben Balonkit, Saint; Jonny Roy, The Daily Tribune; Roger Margallo, Inquirer and Joseph Munoz, Pinoy News. The exhibit will run until Nov. 17 at the Senate building in Pasay City.

Husband dies in fight with wife over gun

By Joanneta I. Andrade

A POLICEWOMAN ACCIDENTally shot and killed her husband as they were grappling for possession of her service firearm inside their house in Novaliches, Quezon City last Sunday.

PO2 Ederlinda Bacolor Almonte, 28, assigned at the National Capital Regional Office, voluntarily placed herself in the custody of the Quezon City Police District Novaliches Station 4 after the incident.

Her husband, Darwin, 29, was declared dead on arrival at the Far Eastern University Hospital. He had been shot once in the jaw, with the bullet exiting through the top of his head.

According to reports from the QCPD Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit, the incident happened at 10:45 a.m. Sunday inside the couple's house in Silanda Village 1, Tower Supa II, Barangay Kaligayahan.

SPO2 Jojo Madrid of the CIDU told the inquirer that the couple had been arguing over financial and personal matters.

"The victim had no job. His wife told me that she and her husband constantly fought over money matters," Madrid said in Filipino.

As they were arguing, Darwin grabbed his wife's bag, where she kept her 9mm Beretta service firearm, and took out the gun.

Madrid said Almonte tried to wrest the firearm away from her husband but it went off in the process.

PO2 Roque Palma and PO2 Reginald Medija, who were called in by the couple's neighbors after the incident, brought the Almonte to the FEU Hospital, but he died on arrival.

Senior Insp. Simeon Inez went to the Novaliches police station to give herself up and to surrender her service firearm.

She was subsequently turned over to the custody of the QCPD-CIDU pending the filing of a parricide charge against her.

Baby boy with meningitis needs financial help

DARLIN MALOLO ZANE ADRIAN Panaligan was born with meningitis, an inflammation of the brain membrane.

Panaligan's condition, characterized by the presence of water in his head, led to hydrocephalus or water accumulation in the brain, according to Lawrence Gonzaga, the baby's 22-year-old father.

Gonzaga, a resident of Kapalaran Street in Barangay Holy Spirit, Quezon City, said the continuous medications and therapy which his son has gone through could have affected his growth and development. The boy is confined at the Philippine Children's Medical Center on Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Panaligan, who takes the nickname of his mother Lubaina, Gonzaga's common-law wife, is unable to see clearly. He cannot walk and his teeth have not to grow.

"The smile on Zane's face every time we touch his lips motivates us to inspire us to look for people who could help him survive," Gonzaga said.

Those who want to help Zane can contact the Gonzagas at 9322045. They can also deposit their donations in his mom's account in any Metrobank branch (account name: Glenn Gonzaga, account number 8443044774170). Santiago A. Aluenzara

PNP intel officer, 24 others relieved for 'irregularities'

By Julie M. Aurelio

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION Police office chief, Director Geary Barias, yesterday ordered the relief of his intelligence officer and 24 other policemen for "alleged irregularities in the performance of their duties."

Sinjo Napoleon Villegas, head of the Regional Police Intelligence Operations Unit, and 24 of his men were relieved after Barias said he received several complaints against the unit.

Villegas was replaced by Supt. Ferdinand Rupil, former deputy police chief of Paranaque City.

Barias cited, in particular, the unit's involvement in the arrest of three foreigners for illegal gambling in Binondo last month.

According to him, the RPIOU should be going after big-time holdup and drug syndicates.

"Why would they operate against a small-time illegal gambling den and arrest aliens for playing card games? I wouldn't explain why they have such an interest in that," he said.

Barias ordered the unit's new officer to concentrate on counter-intelligence and big-time robbery holdup groups and drug syndicates.

"They will not be concerned with low-level crimes like video karera and anti-illegal gambling," he told reporters.

The relief of Villegas and his men came after the RPIOU arrested a Chinese couple who allegedly tried to offer them money for the release of the foreigners arrested in the gambling den.

Asked if this had anything to do with Villegas' relief, Barias replied, "I do not know the exact details. They are still under investigation for alleged irregularities."

No. 1 violators of human rights

ON TARGET
Ellen Tordesillas

SOME COMMISSION ON HUMAN rights officials are asking for police backgrounds after receiving death threats.

If Senior Gonzalez officials were to be examining the cases, why would leading candidates want to have them killed?

* * *

Gonzalez legal chief Alfredo Dalaig was shot dead by an unknown assassin in front of the Hyatt casino.

He was earning P200,000 salary he wasn't killed.

Add a few thousands of peso more to that amount and the rates would be his annual salary.

There were indications that Dalaig was a frequent visitor at the casino.

* * *

The assassination of Dalaig focuses once again on the proliferation of firearms among civilians.

The public, especially the antigun advocates, is again blaming its favorite whipping boy, the licensed gun holders.

They forget that most murders were committed by persons who used unlicensed guns.

A licensed gun owner will think twice before committing a crime.

* * *

Several days after the accident at the intersection of Senate Avenue and Gonzalez Highway in Makati City that killed Dalaig, Gonzaga, wife of former Sen. Rene Saguisag, and injured other senators, executive read rushing killed three people in Marikina.

The first and second accidents were minor incidents that were caused by human violations of traffic rules. The first was caused by the driver of the dump truck who allegedly tried to beat the red light; the second, was reportedly a result of drunk-driving.

When traffic enforcers look the other way, reckless drivers have a heyday.

* * *

Haven't you noticed that big mishaps occur in pairs or threes?

If there's a plane crash, it's followed by another plane mishap.

Remember when a helicopter hosting senatorial candidate Luis "Chavit" Singson crashed?

That was followed by another helicopter crash.

And there's third one.

I've noticed the jinxing coincidences since I covered the police beat in the 1970s and 1980s when I was also assigned to cover disasters.

Why is that so? I have an answer. Do you?

* * *

Some people across the military as the No. 1 human rights violator because of the disappearances and killings of leftists.

Are they kidding? Police-men are still the No. 1 violators of the human and constitutional rights of citizens.

Most of the complaints we shall of "bombong ano kay Tulfo" receive concern abuses committed by policemen.

Soldiers do see routine complaints about soldiers abusing civilians.

That's probably because soldiers are aware the country is no longer under martial law.

By the way, "bombong" still receives complaints from the public even if we still don't have radio and TV programs at the moment.

Our phone numbers are 928-37-88, 0920-228-6423, 0917-808-2156.

Complainants can also visit our office 83 Timog Ave., Quezon City.

METROBRIEFS

4 SWAT members injured while chasing robbers

FOUR members of an elite police team were hurt when the police car they were riding in slammed into a truck and a bridge railing in Kamias City last Sunday. Based on a police report, members of a Special Weapons and Tactics team were running after motorcycle-riding robbers when the tire of their patrol car exploded on the Manila Bridge in North Bay Boulevard South. The vehicle subsequently hit a bridge railing and a parked truck as the robbers escaped. PO2 Marvin Santos, who was driving the police car, sustained optimal injuries and is now confined at the National Orthopedic Hospital. Also hurt were PO2 Roberto Bala, PO2 Mariano Dunlao and PO1 Carlos Yap. They suffered minor injuries and were released after treatment.

Mary C. Corsupi

Manila City Hall opens third satellite office

THE ELDERLY in the Tayuman area in Sta. Cruz, Manila no longer have to go to the Manila City Hall to get a senior citizen's card with the opening of a satellite office in the area today. Mayor Alfredo Lim will lead city officials in opening the third "one-city hall" as part of the city government's efforts to speed up the delivery of services. Aside from senior citizen ID cards, residents, health and birth certificates, police clearances, business permits, marriage license fees, death certificates and tax payments can also be processed at the satellite office. Residents people have free transportation services from their door-step to the office. Other services offered are burial assistance, access to livelihood programs and referrals to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. "The objective is to decongest the delivery of services to the residents of Manila and make it more expensive and more convenient," said City Administrator Jesus Alfaro Marcaida, overall supervisor of the satellite offices. The city's other satellite offices are located at the Baptist Sports Complex in Sampaloc and at the Tondo Sports Complex.

Alison W. Lopez

Micro-finance seminar set on Nov. 14

JOIN the "Scaling up and managing effectively a micro-finance and micro-lending organization" on Nov. 14 at the Bataluan House, Legend Hotel at 80 Pioneer St. in Mandaluyong City. Resource experts from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, CARD Inc., New Rural Bank of San Leonardo Inc., Philippine Federation of Credit Cooperatives and the Development Bank of the Philippines will share expertise and experiences in establishing a micro-finance organization and how to manage it effectively and successfully. For registration, please call TACF at 09-0484, 633-0088 or 09-19-2288777, 09-19-2288788 or e-mail b.bunal@yahoo.com or tacf_phil@yahoo.com.

Car accessories exhibit starts today

MAKILALA kein Sasot, an exhibit of car accessories, will be held at SMX Convention Center beside the Mall of Asia from Nov. 13 to 18. Nayasa Corp., the exclusive distributor in Asia Pacific of antitac theft devices, will be one of the show's exhibitors. These antitac theft units will be called "Bell-O" to help patrons during the event. For information, please call 4503000 or 8848848.

Russian tanker sinks, spills 1,300 tons of oil

MOSCOW/KIEV, RUSSIA, —Russian authorities launched a major rescue operation at the mouth of the Black Sea on Monday to save stranded seamen and contain environmental damage after a storm sank at least four ships and split open a small oil tanker.

Three bodies were found ashore near the Tuzla Spit, a piece of land jutting out from the Russian coast toward the Ukrainian Crimea, Interfax news agency reported. Russia's Emergencies Ministry said at least eight other sailors were missing.

"A border patrol discovered three survivors in life vests ground-ed on the coastline near Tuzla Spit. They may have been crew members of the dry cargo ship Nakhichevan that sank in the port of Kavkaz," Interfax quoted a spokesperson as saying.

Tuesday's storm broke in two a small Russian oil tanker, the Volgoneft-139, off the Ukrainian port of Kerch, spilling at least 1,300 tons of fuel oil in what a Russian official described as an "environmental disaster."

The cause seems to be uneven cracks between the metal hull and deck. Sea, also sank at least four freighters, three carrying sulfur and one with a cargo of scrap metal. The heavy ones also crushed the hull of another oil tanker, but the ship was afloat.

Russian officials said ship-ping in the area had been monitored well in advance of heavy storms but it appeared some captains had chosen to ignore the advice and put to sea.

Viktor Beltsov, a spokesper-son for the Russian Emergencies Ministry, said that six other ships had run aground, though they were not carrying oil.

He said 161 rescuers had already saved 25 crew members and were looking for the other missing seamen.

Officials said that in the cold winter temperatures the fuel oil may sink to the bottom of the sea rather than float on the surface, making it harder to find and disperse.

The Georgian-registered Captain Ismael and the Turkish-flagged Ilya Ilve were both stranded on the shoreline, not far from land's border. The Ilya Ilve was carrying a cargo of metal but the Captain Ismael was empty, local officials said.

The sunken oil tanker, Volgoneft-139, had traveled from the Russian port of Azov and was anchored outside Kerch to shelter from the storm. Crews on a ship out the window, when high waves broke its back on land-ship.

The 1978 built tanker, designed primarily for river and coastal service, was carrying 4,000 tons of fuel oil in total when it broke in the storm.

The likely effects of the spill were not immediately clear.

A spill over 500 tons is considered large, but the biggest ones run into the tens or even hundreds of thousands.

The preferred area is at the bottom of the shallow ocean from natural filters to trap the Black Sea of red-throated and black-throated Siberian diver birds. Reuters

Rice: Senate did not sanction war on Iran

WASHINGTON—SECRETARY of State Condoleezza Rice denied Sunday that the United States was bent on war with Iran and answered an offer of reconciliation talks if the Islamic republic renounces its nuclear ambitions.

Interviewed on ABC television, Rice was pressed on a Senate resolution passed in September that labeled Iran's Revolutionary Guards a terrorist operation—a step that critics said had brought war nearer.

She said that President George W. Bush was doing "[his] job's on a diplomatic path where Iran comes into focus."

"Obviously, it can be the case that he will never take his options off the table, but this particular resolution has nothing to do with it and certainly does not authorize or call referring to the prospect of military force in Iran.

"This resolution is saying that there need to be strong measures taken against Iran, which we have definitely done," she said after the Bush administration announced new sanctions on Iran groups, including the Guards.

Rice spoke a day after US President George W. Bush and German Chancellor Angela Merkel discussed diplomatic strategy towards Iran.

The two leaders appear to differ over what additional measures should be imposed on Tehran, with Merkel preferring to wait until European and UN diplomatic efforts have run their course.

Democratic critics such as presidential contender Barack Obama have said the Senate resolution is a "blank check" for Bush to wage war on Iran, which has refused to turn to international demands to halt its uranium enrichment.

Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney have been using bellicose rhetoric against the Islamic republic, with the president warning of the threat of "World War III" if Iran gains the technology to make nuclear weapons.

Obama reaffirmed Sunday that he would "not hesitate" to open talks with US foes, arguing that the Bush administration was instead "talking to or-ganize the tensions between Iran and the United States."

"Strong countries and strong presidents speak with their adversaries," he said on NBC television, insisting that Washington should offer no pre-conditions to Iran "but also the carrots" of enhanced trade and normalized relations.

Democratic White House frontrunner Hillary Clinton has accused Obama of naivete for his willingness to open high-level talks with US enemies.

But Clinton's chief foreign-policy advisers, former US ambassador Richard Holbrooke, said it was one of the "great failures" when we ignored an Iranian offer of dialogue after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. AFP

UNSEATED. photo of Cebrino Nanunurao

1st indigenous South American is beatified

CHIMBU, ARGENTINA—Tens of thousands of faithful turned up Sunday to witness a ceremony honoring Ceferino Namuncurá, the first indigenous South American to be beatified by the Roman Catholic Church.

"Ceferino is blessed," proclaimed Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, deputy of Pope Benedict XVI, drawing a thunderous ovation from the crowd of onlookers that swelled to 120,000 people for the event, police said.

More than a century after his death in Rome, Namuncurá—the son of a Mapuche Indian chief who fought the Argentine settlers in the late 19th century—became the first person to be beatified from the Salesian, organization said.

The ceremony took place in the southern Patagonia town 1,000 km south of Buenos Aires.

"The Gospel never destroys the values in a culture, but attributes to them a fullness," said Bertone, adding that Namuncurá "never forgot what it was to be native and tried to be useful to his people."

Often, the first step toward sainthood, beatification is a miracle process which in Namuncurá's case began in 1944 and culminated in a "miracle" in 2000, when a young Argentine girl was allegedly cured of ovarian cancer after praying to him.

Pope Benedict XVI officially certified Namuncurá's miracle in July, opening the path to beatification.

The miracle girl, Valeria, her husband and three children were among those who gathered for the beatification ceremony Sunday.

Bertone, the Vatican's secretary of state, celebrated the beatification Mass, which was simultaneously broadcast in Buenos Aires archbishop Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, some 50 bishops from Argentina and Latin America, and by Namuncurá's descendants.

Born Aug. 26, 1886, Ceferino Namuncurá was the son of legendary Mapuche chief Manuel Namuncurá who, after years of fighting the military and white encroachment, surrendered on the advice of a Salesian missionary bishop baptized his son ceferino before was 8.

Ceferino studied as a religious school in Buenos Aires, "so he could be of service to his race" according to historians, and as a priest became renowned for his unwavering faith.

He was proclaimed to [illegible] Pope Pius X to Rome in 1904, but succumbed to tuberculosis a year later. His remains were sent back to Argentina in 1924 and laid to rest in Buenos Aires. AFP

Foreign students added $14B to US economy

WHILE FOREIGN STUDENTS AT American colleges and universities are more often singled out for their scientific and cultural contributions, a growing body of data have help make them an increasingly important economic force as well, according to a new report from the Institute of International Education.

In the 2006-07 school year, the report found, international students and their families in the US economy was nearly $14.5 billion—up a billion dollars from the previous year, the largest annual increase to date.

"These are foreign people buying an American product, said the Department of Commerce says international education is our 10th-largest service export, bigger than medical services," said Allan E. Goodman, president of the institute, a nonprofit organization that promotes international study. "It's a large factor in a lot of cities, including New York, where international students contribute about $1.3 billion, more than the Yankees, the Mets, the Liberty, the Knicks, and the Giants combined."

The number of foreign students in American institutions of higher education, from community college to graduate school, increased three percent over the previous school year to 582,984, the report found. This followed three years of declines, and brought the total back to almost exactly the number of students that came to the United States for the 2001-02 year, just before the Sept. 11 attacks.

Those enrolling in the United States for the first time surged 10 percent last year, a statistic considered important because those students are likely to study in the United States for several years.

Overall, foreign students spent more than $20 billion in 2006-07, about half on tuition and fees and half on living expenses. The report estimated that $0.45 billion came from the students' home countries, mostly from personal and family sources. According to the report, which was largely financed by the State Department and is being officially released Tuesday, fewer than a third got their primary funding from US sources.

The economic contributions grew so quickly last year because of tuition increases, foundation said, and because more foreign students were in expensive out-of-state programs than other less scholarships.

The international students was provided by Nafsa: Association of International Educators, based on the institute's International student data, and made part of the report, Open Doors 2007. AFP

Australia starts voting as Howard tipped to lose

HOWARD

SYDNEY—VOTERS CAST THE first ballots in Australia's elections on Monday in a new opinion poll showed conservative Prime Minister John Howard heading for a landslide defeat.

The ballots were registered in a tiny outback community as mobile polling teams headed across the vast country to cater for voters in remote areas ahead of election day on Nov. 24.

The vote cast by scores of Aborigines at Ephrath Bore south of Darwin marked the start of early voting for those unable to make it in polling rooms on election day and for Australians abroad.

The first vote of a ballot, George Brandhorst, said he had voted for Howard in the last election in 2001 but objected to the government's move this year to seize control of remote Aboriginal communities.

"I voted Liberal last time but Howard, he's changed the rules on us," Brandhorst told the national AAP news agency. "Some things are changing and people are worried for their families, they don't like the changes."

Hackbridge said he hoped Labor leader Kevin Rudd would win the election "and things can go back to normal."

The ballot boxes will remain sealed until the polls close and counting starts, but a series of opinion polls suggests the result is clear cut and the government will be ousted after nearly 12 years in power.

The latest poll, published Monday, showed Labor had gained two percentage points over the past week on external issues and over Howard's Liberal-National coalition on 51 percent against 49 percent. AFP

No hanging of 'Chemical Ali' till legal row resolved, says US

BAGHDAD-US FORCES will not hand over "Chemical Ali" and two other cohorts of Saddam Hussein for execution until a legal row is settled, the US embassy said Monday, responding to a letter struck by Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki.

"There continue to be differences in viewpoint within the government of Iraq regarding the necessary legal-ized and procedural requirements for carrying out death sentences issued by the Iraqi High Tribunal," US spokesperson Mercedes Saunders said.

"Coalition forces will continue to retain physical custody of the defendants until this issue is resolved," she added.

On Sunday, Maliki warned the US embassy of playing as "unfortunate role" in preventing the hangmen of the three condemned men, who, like other members of Saddam's ousted regime, are in US military custody.

He said a press conference in Baghdad that his government was "determined" that the executions be carried out.

But Hastings said, "There is still discussion within the government of Iraq over the legal requirements in this case. We are waiting for the government to come to consensus as to what their law requires before preparing a physical transfer."

Ali Hassan al-Majid, widely known as "Chemical Ali" for his use of poisonous gas against Kurdish Sultan Hashim al-Ta'i, Saddam's defense minister, and Hussein Rashid al-Tikriti, his armed forces deputy chief of operations, were sentenced to death on June 24.

They were found responsible for the slaughter of thousands of Kurds in the so-called Anfal Operation. AFP

Ali Hassan al-Majid, (de) known as "Chemical Ali"

In US, cell phone straitjacket is inspiring a rebellion

By Laura M. Holson

FIRST COME THE GRUMBLINGS, then the techies and gadgetheads.

Consumers have never been happy about their cell phone carriers and the services they provide—or refuse to provide. But they also have hardly the means to do anything, except switch from one carrier to the next.

But a rebellion is brewing in the communications industry that is expected to pit wireless carriers, including AT&T and Verizon Wireless, against Silicon Valley powerhouses like Google. The inside angles underwrite the control incumbent companies have over mobile phone consumers by giving them a few weapons to strike back.

The first salvo came last summer with the release of the Apple iPhone, which, with its easy-to-use features, redefined how consumers view mobile phones. Google generated further when it announced plans for the Open Handset Alliance, a consortium of companies working on new mobile phones that could help computers that can offer a variety of applications and services.

In addition, federal regulators are moving to create a more open, unbiased wireless network when it auctions off spectrum licenses in January that would allow bidders to build a network free from carrier constraints.

At the heart of the tension between the different camps is whether the wireless network should be open, much like the Internet is today, or remain under the watchful control of companies like AT&T and Verizon Wireless, a joint venture of Verizon Communications and Vodafone. Carriers, who spend billions of dollars to build their networks, are unwilling to open them.

Yet others, change can't happen soon enough. As such the alliances and partnerships struck now are likely to shape the industry over the next five years.

"It is the battle of the ever-dotcom," said Tom Wheeler, a veteran cigarette and former chief of the CTIA, a trade group for the wireless industry. "They are all jostling back and forth to be leaders of the next generation. The question is, 'How do I position myself?' It is a consistent battle." NYT

Applying for personal loans the fast and easy way

GE Money Bank's new facility allows consumers to apply for personal loans online

Manila, 08 October 2007 - GE Money Bank, a savings bank, introduces a new and efficient way to apply for a personal loan. Applying for a personal loan will no longer be a tedious undertaking.

No more trips to the bank and anxiety to find out whether you are qualified for the loan. Through this safe and secure online service, you can get a glimpse of your eligibility for a personal loan, in the comfort, privacy and convenience of your home or office.

By simply logging in to the website at http://www.gemoneybank.com.ph and answering a few simple questions, you will see if you are initially eligible for a loan. If you qualify, you will be advised regarding the loan package the bank can extend to you. The facility will also flash a loan offer snapshot, eliminating uncertainties on the loan amount that you are qualified for. It's safe, secure and completely hassle-free! If you decide to pursue the application, you will be directed to an online application form from which you can opt to completely fill out or be contacted instead by a GE Money Bank representative.

GE Money Bank's new channel is initially available for personal loan applications at flexible payment terms and for as low as 1.08% add-on rate per month. The loans offered through this new channel initially include personal loans, but will soon be offered for auto loans and home loans.

This new way to apply for loans with GE Money Bank is in line with the Bank's thrust to offer its clients simply better banking by removing the complications in the banking process for customers.

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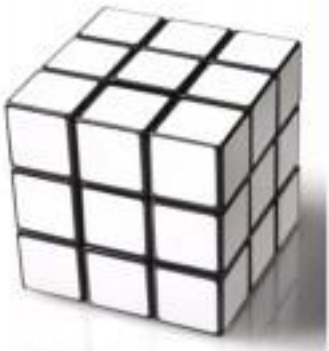

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This is simply better banking.
This is GE Money Bank.

GE imagination at work

Ellie Lorene B. Suso

MUSHARRAF: shows speaking to media, but says that parliamentary elections should be held on schedule, but that emergency rule would remain in place to ensure that the polls would be free and transparent.

Musharraf: Emergency rule to last until polls

ISLAMABAD—GEN. PERVEZ Musharraf, the Pakistani president, appeared to yield to intense American pressure on Sunday by restoring parliamentary elections in early January, but he said his emergency decree would last at least through then, immediately raising new questions about the vote's legitimacy.

US officials and Musharraf's main political rival, the opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, endorsed his announcement as a small step. Still, any election held when basic civil liberties have been scrapped could create new credibility problems for Musharraf, who has become increasingly isolated politically and for Bhutto, who returned to Pakistan from exile in order to participate in the electoral process.

Many opposition politicians and Western diplomats dismissed the election date as a move to ease the outcry against Musharraf's seizure of additional power. They questioned how the country could have free elections when his security forces have arrested 3,500 civilians, suspended the Constitution, blocked independent news channels and banned public gatherings.

"It's an attempt at a step," said one Western diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity in keeping with diplomatic protocol. "We're looking to see whether simply announcing an election date will placate people."

In another expansion of power, the government announced Saturday that it had amended an army law so that civilians could be prosecuted by military courts. The last time Pakistani civilians faced courts-martial was during the 11-year military dictatorship of Muhammad Zia ul-Haq, which ended in 1988.

In Baluchistan, the government said two politicians from the province, Mr. Ehsan Bitenjo and Yusuf Mastikhan, would be charged with treason for provoking insurgency rule. Muhammad Ali Tarli, a government legal advisor, said the banning of army uniforms by political protestors would also be prosecuted in military courts.

Musharraf announced the rescued election date at his first news conference since proclaiming emergency powers eight days earlier, a move that has created global alarm about the political stability of Pakistan, a nuclear-armed country that is the most important American ally in the region and where Islamic militants have been expanding their reach. But Musharraf rejected demands at home and abroad to cut a date for ending the emergency decree, which has effectively placed Pakistan under martial law.

Combative, defiant and increasingly authoritarian, Musharraf said the decree was precisely what was needed to fight the growing Islamic extremism threat to the country and "ensure absolutely fair and transparent elections."

NYT

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **Lady Eagles** oust FEU tossers; UST on top /A22

SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy B. Melendrez Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Cabico

Text us your feedback: inquirer.sports@yahoo.com or 559-Globe or 892-Omni; E-mail jc_sports@inquirer.com.ph

- **Yao, McGrady** lift Rockets /A23

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is presented a WBC world champion's belt by the organization's president, Jose Sulaiman, in yesterday's opening of the 45th WBC International Convention. The five oldest recipients of the belt include Nelson Mandela, Pope John Paul II. PHOTO

WBC honors Pacman as 'Champ Emeritus'

By Marc Anthony Reyes and Edwin L. Luganting, *Contributor*

THE WORLD BOXING COUNCIL (WBC) YESTERDAY DECLARED Filipino superstar Manny Pacquiao its Champion Emeritus as one of the three biggest contributing leaders in the sport officially kicked off its 45th Annual World Convention at the Manila Hotel.

President Mauricio Sulaiman announced yesterday's opening, along with WBC president Jose Sulaiman, Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, Gilas chair Eric Buhain, WBC heavyweight champion Wladimir Klitschko, and Pacquiao.

Sulaiman also presented a WBC belt to Mr. Arroyo, whom Lim described as "a champion in her own right" in the political arena.

Mr. Arroyo was accompanied to the ceremony by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Speaker Jose de Venecia, and Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno.

Sulaiman, in his speech, presented the creation of a WBC boxing gym in the Philippines through the leadership of Pacquiao.

The Filipino ring icon was set to receive his award on Monday night, according to Pacquiao adviser Rex "Mike" Salud, who originally proposed that Pacquiao be honored the recognition.

Pacquiao is also scheduled to host a dinner for WBC officials and delegates attending the convention, added Salud.

Meanwhile, the boxing hero insisted undecided on who his next opponent will be to fight.

"I haven't decided on anything," said Pacquiao. "It all depends on the negotiations."

Obviously, he is keeping his options open for his next fight, which Top Rank's Bob Arum said is already set for March 15.

He also didn't make any moves from the lineup of possible foes that include WBC super featherweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez, WBC lightweight king David Diaz and World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation titlist Juan Diaz.

Instead, he focused on the WBC sessions, lambasting points on the organization.

"The Filipino people is proud to see that the WBC has endured and launched a decades," said Pacquiao. "The history of WBC will not be complete without mentioning the Philippines."

The convention resumes today with sessions scattered for the different regional bodies which are under the WBC umbrella.

Orient Pacific Boxing Federation president Frank Quill is set to preside his organization's convention starting at 2 p.m. today.

STANDINGS	W	L
Harbour	1	0
Hapee	1	0
NP Team	1	0
T-Mobile	1	0
Tanduay	1	0
Utah Athletics	1	0
Sunkist	0	1
Pharex	0	1
Manila Water	0	1
GAMES TODAY		
7:15 p.m.—Harbour vs Hapee		
Manila Water vs Pharex		
9 p.m.—T-Mobile vs Sunkist		

Hapee, Harbour dispute solo lead today

FILAM GAME MORNWOOD GETS A chance to boost his stock further when Hapee and Harbour Centre dispute the solo lead in the PBL 9 En Masarap Energy Drink Cup today at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

Now an official member of the Smart-bred Philippine team, Norwood will be in the limelight when the Complete Protection and the defending champion Batang Pier collide at 2 p.m.

Hapee and Harbour Centre boast of identical 1-0 slates with Norwood dishing out an all-around game when Hapee downed Bacolod, 93-89, Saturday.

The Batang Pier have pulled ahead of the Complete Protection with a 103-86 win of Bryan Salamunak.

The fixture starts for George Mason University unbeaten v. game-high 21 points on top of seven rebounds, six assists and four steals.

Mid-and Mars, team mates over Toyota Balintawak, will shoot for its second straight win at 4 p.m. against Pharex.

Jasmine B. Aspe

Norwood's in; RP five whips Singapore

By Ray Lustre

SINGAPORE—HE FAILED TO JOIN the Hatbreed Centro-Philippine Team's nine hour, but 6'5 certain Gabe Norwood will be needed to boost the country's campaign in the Southeast Asian Games in December.

The veteran of the 6-foot-5 Norwood to the national team by the Alaska Teamphone management, led by owner and PBL chair Dr. Emilio Pedro, Monday afternoon provided more joy to the Nationals who routed the Singaporeans, 90-62, on Sunday.

The matching staff, headed by Jamel Hamdi, welcomed the news relayed by PP assistant team manager Eric Arejola, and said that the former George Mason U standout in the US NCAA will play a vital role in the country's title retention bid to the Thailand SEAG next month.

Though Norwood plays the point and off-guard positions in the PBL, Ricardi said he may also see the dirt, highlighting PE Am as a small forward.

The Nationals, led by two-time PBL MVP Jayson Castro, are playing against the US Navy Selection at presstime at the Singapore Basketball Center.

Amateur basketball godfather Mikee Romero, who is keen to oversee the Nationals' training, was also elated by Norwood's release.

"It's a big, big development as far as the team is concerned and I'd like to thank the (PBL) board for coming out to help the team," said Romero. "This endeavor is not for Hatbreed Center but for the country."

With Jonathan Fernandez knocking in four triples and Patrick Cabahug adding three, the Nationals stayed with the Singaporeans, going jay to some 50/50 balance in the gallery.

The Nationals, showing that they have toughened a bit on defense, held the Singaporeans to just nine points in each of the first two quarters en route to a 42-18 halftime spread.

"We're on track and I'm happy to see that we're improving since our last game in the PBL tournament," said Ricardi. "May continuation na sa lindsay Bakbiyan ngayon."

Back home, PBL commissioner Chito Narvasa has expressed his gratitude to all owners and team representatives for supporting the national team.

"As I've said before, PBL teams will always help and deliver if it is for the national cause," said Narvasa. "So everybody agreed to help the PP team."

"He's quick and a very intelligent player so I have high respect for him," said Hamdi of Norwood, who carried Harper to a 4-0 start in the current PBL tournament and saw action for the PP team that played to to Hsu Asia championship in Japan last July.

Hamdi said that at least two more players will be added to further bolster the Hatbreed SEAG charges.

UPDATE: The Philippine delegation may receive a windfall soon if the Sri Lankan Parliament passes a bill by Cabinet minister Keerthi Tennakoon. The delegation's delegates and managers may receive the same share that weight lifters and Hong Kheong in silver-medal Asian Games. Asia Games are the country's top earning sports for the most popular Filipino athletes.

THE SCORE
SINGAPORE 90 – Norwood 16, Mapa 12, Abueva 10, Castelo 9, Cruz 8, Jose Garcia 7, Cruz 7, Fajardo 6, Castro 4, Cabahug 3, Vergara 2, Ho 2, Fernandez 2, Tiu 0.
SINGAPORE 62 – Lim 14, Andreasen 9, Ahmad 8, Chiah 7, Ang 6, Jiang 5, Teh 5, Ali 5, Ahi 2, Jiang 1.
Quarters: 23-9, 42-18, 72-32, 90-62.

GAME Norwood gets go-signal to join the Philippine team.

SEAG sked favors Filipino cagers

BANGKOK—IF THE SCHEDULE released by the Thailand SEA Games Organizing Committee holds true, the Philippine Centro-Philippine men's basketball team would be enjoying a hassle-free defense of the title.

The Nationals will have the lightweight Cambodians as their inaugural foes on Dec. 7 and the dangerous Thais as their last opponents on Dec. 13 in the five-nation, single-round robin basketball competition at the Rangsiton Stadium inside the Rangsiton University in Nakhon Pathom province.

After the 1 p.m. Philippine-Cambodia tussle, Malaysia and Indonesia take the floor at 3 p.m., giving the coaching staff, headed by Jamel Hamdi, ample time to scout their other key rivals at their Rizalvention bid.

Host Thailand, which is reportedly beefing up its team with United States-based Thais, opens its campaign against Malaysia on Dec. 8 with both teams expected to duel out their best.

"It's just like a cut-throat in the storm," said Hamdi. "It will give us time to adjust and to control our tempo." Ray Lustre

ATENEO'S Thai import Kosinee Lilisarat (center) shoots her throwaway over Fau Eastern's Ayi Lovel Mary Anne Maralit and Jacquiza Cattanza.

Lady Eagles oust FEU tossers; UST on top

By Ramina S. Aurelio

ATENEO ENDED ITS EASTERN UNIVERSITY'S SEMIFINAL HOPE WITH A 25-20, 14-25, 25-25, 27-25, 15-11 win yesterday in the 2007 Shakey's V-League women's volleyball second conference before a big crowd at The Arena in San Juan.

The victory likewise gave Ateneo—spd La Salle, both toting 2-1 slates, first ride to the next round regardless of the result of their 5 p.m. match today.

In the second game, Ust worship of Santa Teresa finally grabbed top spot after outsiding erstwhile unbeaten San Sebastian College, 11-25, 25-10, 25-9, 25-16.

The Tigresses will enter the semifinal with a 0-1 card while the Lady Stags, whom they swept in the first conference finale, can equal that mark with a win over winless Letran at 5 p.m.

Ateneo's Thai import Lilisarat Rositano scored 16 for Lady Eagles' last two points, including a seven-foot fire for the Spikers' knockout.

That play capped the Lady Eagles' comeback from a set down in the third and second-frames third spot at 5-2.

FEU, playing one injured star Rachel Anne Daquis, could have found a playoff with the loser of the Adamson-La Salle

GAMES TODAY (Ateneo)
3 p.m.—Adamson vs. La Salle
5 p.m.—FEU vs. UST

made had they won.

The Lady Tamaraws ended their campaign with a 1-3 slate.

Rositano, veteran of two UAA Games, wound up with 20 points highlighted by 19 kills, including one that moved Ateneo within a point from clinching the win in the decider.

Ms. Rosario Rositano scored 17 points for the Lady Eagles who struggled in the second and third sets.

But the Lady Eagles put their act together in the fourth although they had to go through some anxious moments before forcing a deciding fifth set.

Jan Sebastian, UST, Ateneo, Adamson and La Salle make up the rest in the single round robin semifinal where they carry their respective eliminations rounds.

PBA officially opens search for new head

THE PHILIPPINE BASKETBALL ASSOciation begins its search for a new commissioner officially today when the selection committee led by league chair Sixto Chua lays down the guidelines for prospective candidates.

The committee, which already came up with a list of qualifications for the top executive of Sixth Asia, who resigned under a cloud of controversy.

Formed in Macau over a month ago, the selection committee is composed of PBA vice-chair Joaquin Wilfo Ofialdez, team governors Robert Yew (Welcoat), former chair Eddy Vergara (Talk 'N Text) and SAGO Governor Leo Abrams.

The group met at lunch yesterday to describe what they called their "ideal point man."

Ofialdez in charge Sonny Barrios, who was also at the meeting, said the committee unanimously agreed that the selection process will be based on a "points system." He said a timetable for the endeavor has also been set.

The next commissioner, the committee agreed, should have an excellent "general management perspective" with strong suits in marketing and finance.

The committee has unanimously agreed to put premium on marketing skills and gave it a corresponding 40 points. Barrios said knowledge of financial matters is worth 20 points. The remaining points will be summed among the different traits the next commissioner should possess: independence, integrity and good public relations.

Barrios said representatives of the league's 10 ball clubs should submit the name of their nominees to him on or before Nov. 20.

Based on the timetable set by the committee—and barring any hitches, the league's governing body—the new commissioner will be named no later than Jan. 31 next year.

WBL TITLISTS OFF TO BIG START

The 2006 MVP Center Warner's Basketball League recently kicked off hostilities with defending champion Community of Love-Army Foundation and University of Santa Teresa scoring victories at the Xavier Sports Complex.

Elementary Girls: COLF beat St. Pedro Poveda, 49-26 while college champion UST waylaid DFI in Boys, 47-19. In the high school competitive division, Assumption beat San Beda-Alabang, 30-19, (in photo) and Angeles-ave College upset UCMAE, 29-22.

SPORTSWATCH

Derby at the Big Dome

POPULAR GAME FOWL BREEDERS from different provinces have each another today at the Araneta Coliseum in the U.AKO-strong NPGB National Sabungan 10-cock derby eliminations round starts at 1 p.m.

Cocking up for battle are members of the Batangas Breeders Club, Pullacat breeders, Laguna Gamefowl Breeders Association, PAGACOBA, United Bulacan Club, Rizal CBA, United Alicanda CBA and Visayas club.

Manny Barbosa, head of National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders marketing and sponsorship, said the Thunderbird Championship bell will be awarded to the group to win three grand champion belongs.

Breeders guest in PSA

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF GAME FOWL Breeder's Inc. honchos led by their president Rosy Ramirez and Thunderbird Power Feeds product manager Francis Martinez are guests today in the Philippine Sportswriters Association weekly forum at Shakey's Pizza in U.N. Avenue, Manila.

The panelists will announce the staging of the Rosy P1MM Bakbakan National 10-Gang Derby.

Also in the discussion: Thunderbird's Philippine Cockfighting Domination Tour.

Marathon finalists set party

A CARBOHYDRATE-LOADING PARty will be held on Thursday at the North Greenhills Club House in San Juan to honor all qualifiers to the 31st National Milo Marathon finals before the 42K race on Sunday, November 18.

Sunday's winners get P75,000 each.

WOMEN NOT QUALIFIED: Rosalinda Cantos, Geraldine Marina, Elsie Ignacio, Quenelita Nalos, Marisol Agnes, Nida Cuchina, Jenel Laguna, Ali Smith, Cindy Jamero, Helen Pamplona, Jocelyn Kwan and Rachel Paez.
MEN NOT QUALIFIED: Reynaldo Cruzabra, Marcelo Cortez, Rogelio Sarmiento, Nolasco Cruz, Reynaldo Sanchez Jr., Jonas Bandoy, Andy Nicer, Ronald Dizon, Marcos Nicolas, Lot Pares, Gary Siain, Sammuel Pasion, Miguel Lopez, Joseph Reyes, Rosauro Ortega, Angel Cortez Jarlos, Ferdie Martin, Ford Abella, Reynaldo Marina, Ramon Jose Pena, Francisco Lee Perez, Roberto Mejia, Vicente Pedrosa, Eduardo Enriquez, Leo Camargo, Alfonso Gonzalez, Edwin Diaz, Jorge Asuncion, Maximo Gonzalez, Rafael Diaz Cruz Jr., Angelo Nicolas, Andy Ramos, Federal Bacani, Joselito Reyes, Pedro Fernandez Jr., Rosito Ignao, Jose Sanchez, Ernesto Agas, Norberto Sandoval, Eleazar Sarino, Rony Pena, Mark Saul Peralta, Wilson Cuesta, Ray Dy Rosario, Gregorio Perez, Vicente Cabrera, Roderick Cabacho, Glen Ayes, Julius Reyes, Tarsicio Pineda, Rodolfo Guerrero, Jesus Ignacio, Melvin Dungca, Mark Angelo Mina, Nicolas Fernando Jr., Alexander Nolasco, Anthony Nolasco.
Cesar Calderon Jr., Raymund Duran, Marcelino Castro, Dante Duran, Antonio Martinez, Eugene Demolder Jr., Jose Eric Encina, Joselito Medina, Ricardo Cruz, Jose Ramon Cruz, Jose Ramon Cruz, Dennis Cabrera, Wilfredo Tan, Jose Ramon Cruz, Jose Ramon Cruz, Jose Ramon Cruz

AFTER breaking free from the pack and streaking down the court by his teammates, LeBron James caps a fastbreak play with a swirling dunk. AP/File

Yao, McGrady lift Rockets

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA—Yao Ming capped a 24-point performance with two clutch free throws to rally the Houston Rockets to an 85-82 road win over the Charlotte Bobcats on Tuesday.

Yao put the Rockets ahead 83-82 with 26 seconds remaining and Mike James added two more free throws to seal Houston's third straight win.

Charlotte had a seven-point lead with six minutes to play before Tracy McGrady and Yao teamed for seven straight points, and McGrady scored 12 of his 26 points in the third period and Yao added six.

"That may be the best one-two combination since Michael Jordan and (Scottie) Pippen," Bobcats forward Gerald Wallace told reporters.

Yao hit 7-13 of 15 field goal attempts and all eight free throws to go with eight rebounds.

Hicks's free throw came after he retrieved a missed three-point attempt by teammate Baker Akinn and was fouled by the Bobcats' Eeroha Chaiko.

"When I saw the ball come to me and I said, 'I cannot let this go. I have to go in it'," Yao told reporters. "I was in perfect position."

McGrady countered on just nine of 26 shots but his seven of nine free throws.

"This was a game that we should have lost, really because we didn't play particularly well," McGrady told reporters. "But we found some ways to keep ourselves in the game and when it mattered most, myself and Yao brought us home."

Matt Carroll paced the Bobcats with 17 points. Jason Richardson and Raymond Felton contributed 16 each. Chaiko added 12 points and 11 rebounds.

In other games, it was Washington 101, Atlanta 90; Miami 75, New York 72; Boston 85, Charlotte 82; New Orleans 99, Philadelphia 72; San Antonio 113, Milwaukee 86; Detroit 107, Seattle 103; Cleveland 103, LA Clippers 89.

In Atlanta, the Washington Wizards avoided the first 0-6 start in franchise history beating the Atlanta Hawks behind Caron Butler's 24 points.

All five Washington starters scored in double figures for the first time this season. Antawn Jamison had 20 points and 11 rebounds, and Brendan Haywood added 15 points and 12 rebounds. Gilbert Arenas scored 18 points.

In New York, Jason Williams made the go-ahead jump shot with 19 seconds left, and Miami edged New York for its first victory of the season.

In Philadelphia, Tauid Steve and Chris Paul each scored 16 points, Bobby Jackson had 12 and New Orleans snapped a two-game losing streak.

In Los Angeles, LeBron James added 22 as Cleveland rallied to beat the Clippers.

Drew Gooden added 18 points and 17 rebounds for the defending Eastern Conference champions, who needed a fourth-quarter spurt after blowing leads of 11 and 13 points in the game.

In Seattle, Richard Hamilton scored 30 of his season-high 32 points during a torrid first quarter, and Detroit held off a late charge to drop the Supersonics 107-103, their seventh loss.

Hamilton topped his night with a 17-foot leaner with 45.9 seconds left to give Detroit a 103-99 lead, after the Pistons squandered a 23-point first half advantage.

Antonio McDyess and Rasheed Wallace both finished with 15 points, and McDyess grabbed 13 rebounds for Detroit.

Seattle was led by Kevin Durant's 19 points and 17 from fellow rookie Jeff Green.

Reuters, AP

Asean tour targets expansion

SINGAPORE—THE ASEAN TOUR IS STILL in its infancy but after only three events the region's newest circuit is targeting huge development in Southeast Asian golf.

Launched in September with a five-stop calendar, tour executive chair Ari Wong announced that considers hosting events in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam.

"Our thing that is very encouraging over the last three events is that we had a lot of younger professionals coming forward."

While the Asian Tour would could be regarded as a setback, the support of its players is a huge boost that will also encourage them local professionals to turn out for their home tournaments.

"As long as we don't have an Asian Tour commitment I will come and play Asian Tour events," Filipino Angelo Que said after winning the $50,000 Laguna National event on 2-1 under par. Reuters

CRUISING the field, Paula Creamer tees off on the way to a win. AP

Creamer whips LPGA's finest

MOBILE, ALABAMA—PAULA CREAMER CONtinues to write victory at the LPGA Tournament of Champions here Sunday, firing a four-under-par 68 in the final round to beat Korean rookie Se Ri Pak by eight strokes.

Creamer finished at 20-under par 268 after making a bogey on the final hole. Her first in 62 holes, that jumped her lead—matching the 72-hole tournament record of 280 set last year by Meaker and Pak. Lorena Ochoa.

"I wanted to break the record. It definitely was a good one," Creamer said. "It's first of a full year that I didn't gain. But at the same time I will take it. It's a win. That's a BIG-ol' non-complaint maybe."

Pak's Creamer's fourth career LPGA victory and her first triumph since the event's opener in February of 2000. AFP

HENIN: A master to remember AFP

Henin rules longest WTA final ever

MADRID, SPAIN—JUSTIN HENIN HAS ended the toughest season of her career with one of her toughest victories.

That's exactly how she would have scripted it.

Henin rallied to beat Monica Seles, playing in her first final in the tournament's history. It was also the top-ranked Belgian's longest match at a tournament, nearly 3 hours, 39 minutes.

Henin became the sixth player to defend her season-ending championship when Hingis retired her fifth match point.

"I won't say I played 100 percent but I kept fighting a lot. I played with my heart today," Henin said. "I had to find the resources, mentally and physically, but I think it's a match everyone will remember."

Henin won her 45th straight match to close the season with a 63-4 mark. Also included a fourth French Open title and her second US Open trophy. Both final were the last player—in 1996—to win those three titles in the same year. AP

Roddick survives scare against Davydenko

SHANGHAI—ANDY RODDICK SURVIVED a scare against Russia's Nikolay Davydenko at the Tennis Masters Cup on Monday to win his opening round robin match, 6-3 4-6 6-2.

Davydenko's gutsy fightback from a set and a break down sparked a tentrum from the American, who smashed his racket in disgust at his second set collapse.

But Roddick recovered superbly, storming through the third set to severely dent his opponent's chances at the $4.45 million season-ending event in Shanghai.

Both players have endured almost constant pressure at the hands of world number one Roger Federer in the past, making victory in their Red Group opener imperative.

Federer, chasing his fourth Masters Cup title in the last five years, was playing Chile's fernando Gonzalez later on Monday in the other one-night-stand tournament.

Roddick has won just once in 15 previous meetings with Federer while Davydenko has lost all 10.

Playful number two Rafael Nadal and Australian Lleyton David Ferrer won their Gold Group opener on Sunday. Reuters

ROBY Busine gets off to a good start and powers the R2R Tuason Racing Kids to the Speedzone 4-Hour Enduro championship.

Who will unseat Jose Sulaiman?

SINCE THE UNMEMORABLE JOSE SULAIMAN took over as president of the World Boxing Council in 1975, the organization has not changed leadership.

"Sulaiman will be there forever," once said the late Archimedes "Jun" Montano, who became the WBC president in 1984. "In order to effect changes we need to have somebody with influence and the expertise who could stand up and fight the unfavorable the WBC, somebody who commands respect of the boxing world.

"Sadly," added Montano, "there is no one to take up the cudgels. The senate politics is making it very very difficult for the other challengers, including another Filipino, to unseat Sulaiman."

Sulaiman, a native of Mexico, once served under Montano during his term.

A short, proud man, Sulaiman rose to become the most powerful—and feared—figure in the history of professional boxing. Through the years, Sulaiman has increased his power base.

Still, boxing people have raised many questions in the organization playing by its own rules and creating its own champions—and refuse a promoter or manager a post of the inner circle, still he have a hard time getting recognition for his boxer?

What about the continued explorations of boxers? And ill-equipped medical examinations in some WBC member countries? And

CLEAN LIVING

Manuelo R. Ditigo

the frequency of gross mismatches?

Heated by the Games and Amusement Board, the WBC is holding its 45th annual convention in Manila.

I am challenging the honorable delegates to make significant progress and not merely pay lip service to human rights.

* * *

My hat's off to cool and calculating Daryl Peach of England for stopping Gulberto Jacinupo Robert Gomez of the Philippines, 11-15, in their never-boxing bouts at the 2000 World Pool Championship Sunday at the Araneta Coliseum.

Even though the Englishman proved no strong, I had predicted that a Filipino would win the boxer's edition of the World Pool, I was consoled by the fact that Gomez, known as "Superman" in billiards circles, gave Daryl a helluva time ending the dramatic victory.

In winning the $100,000 first-prize money, Daryl scored upset wins over two highly regarded Filipinos...last year's champion Ronnie Alcano and Fast favorite Francisco "Django" Bustamante.

Gomez's loss was reminiscent of a similar failure during the 2002 NPC in Cardiff when Bustamante also suffered a heartbreaking defeat at the hands of American Earl "The Pearl" Strickland.

At that time, Django almost abandoned the tournament when he learned about the death of his 8-month-old daughter. Mailed, but he decided to continue to play and finish the tournament for the sake of flag and country.

* * *

NOTA BENE. To faithful reader Renato Vegas of Makati City: Thank you for your kind thoughts. I did mention that former senator Robert Jaworski, who made his PBA debut in 1975 and retired at age 52 in 1990, "was the oldest man to ever play professional basketball." Jaworski is not the oldest athlete in the world."

I stress about it to stress that the PBA is a "professional league" and not an "amateur tournament" like the Olympics where no cash prizes are handed out...

Calling all San Beda College grade school batch of 1991 and high school batch of 1995. There will be a grand reunion at 7 pm on Saturday, Dec. 1, at Inchalam Grill on Quezon Avenue corner Examiner Street in Quezon City. for details, call or text Mike Inda at 0915-6492888.

R2R-Tuason rules Speedzone Enduro

THE R2R-TUASON RACING Kids team showed its mad driving skills and teamwork to humble 19 squads and ride the Speedzone 4-Hour Enduro race recently to win bragging rights.

Roby Busine, Bobby Bermio, Jr., Evan Severino and John Vincullos took turns in delivering the victory for the R2R-Tuason Racing team which completed just one lap to the six-hour race featuring veteran and novice experienced champion karters.

The winning team secured pole position courtesy of new owners Severino who clocked a fast 58.717 seconds in the qualifying nine minute solo Formula Quickly pulled away from the pack on her very first lap.

After one hour and 45 minutes of driving, Bermio gained a one and a half lap lead over the second place team and Severino gained another R2R Tuason Racing Kids' lead to three laps.

Severino continued the fight for victory as she said a half hour and widened the gap to more than four laps over the closest rival before Vincullos smoothly cruised to the finish line to complete the job.

"The boys did a terrific job and delivered the strategy just as planned. I'm really proud of them. However, we're not one of the rounds yet. We still have a bigger challenge in some in February," said R2R team manager Chito Inciong.

Backed by Tuason Racing, DansKart, KDC Auto Releases, AIM Racing Garages and R2R Racing Gear, the team is now preparing to compete in the Speedzone 24 Hr Enduro expected Citibank Savings Inc. in February next year.

SPORTS

GOMEZ: Too many missed opportunities

Crowd proves a bane for Gomez

By Manong R. Castillo

MICHAELA TABB, THAT SHAPELY BRUnette from Britain, will remember the title match of the 2007 World Pool Championship last Sunday, because eventual winner Daryl Peach and Filipino Roberto Gomez, for two very opposite reasons.

"That was the smallest crowd (on a match) I have ever officiated in," Tabb, at 39, regarded as the top woman and billiard referee in the world, told the bounce between puffs of cigarette just minutes after the showdown at the Solaire Collonade walkway.

"And I think they (local crowd) jumped on him too much," added Tabb, referring to how the predominantly Filipino gallery backed Gomez the more than four hours.

"There was so much pressure on him. Gomez need no player was really able to settle down on dance."

Tabb admitted to paying attention to two things—the table and the crowd—just to make sure that both players remained focused.

"I had to dance a lot out there, right in the very first inch. No offense to the crowd," Tabb said. "But he (Gomez) got all the more nervous after he made mistakes because he could really feel the crowd's displeasure."

Tabb said that some foreign players still misunderstand the way the Filipino gallery dances in support (not for a bad for, especially when the stakes are high).

"Some of them (foreign players) talked to me, because they felt that they were being applauded after they bungle a shot or commit a foul," Tabb said. "But I think next (Filipino) crowd is just all in in rooting a lot.

Unlike Tabb, the Filipinos obviously liked to forget what happened in the finals, when Gomez threw many one opportunity after the other to lose, 15-17.

The 28-year-old reinforcement Superman admitted to cracking up under pressure.

Meantime, Gomez will have a full year to regroup, shrink his nerves and learn to respond to a crowd that gives in all every time.

OLYMPIC FEST NAT'L MEET

Reg'l champs in full force

By Jane Navarro

WITH ITS SIZE AND MIGHT, BAGUIO CITY SHOULD BE A CONTENDER FOR the overall title in the 2nd Philippine Olympic Festival national championships that opened yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

The Baguio delegation, overall champion of the Cordillera-Northern Luzon qualifying games held in Vigan, Ilocos Sur early this year, is fielding 200 rank athletes from 17 disciplines.

A married arm and combat sports power in the region, Baguio boasts of the largest contingent from among the 40 local government units participating, followed by Laguna's 172 athletes.

While Baguio boasts of its fighters led by Jay Oled of young and erstwhile pugilist Melissa De Leon, Laguna, the winner of the Rizal-Southern Tagalog qualifying games, will be banking on its swimmers.

Iloilo and Iloilo City, which both ruled the Visayas leg, also showed up at the opening ceremonies presided by Philippine Olympic Committee and POF chair Robert Aventajado with a combined force of 263 athletes.

Also gracing the festival' rites were POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez and sports leaders from the 17 participating national sports associations.

"The POF provides an endgame for these athletes. If they emerge as the best, they could end up as members of the national team," said Aventajado.

Dambanagan Chef Hurer representative Gene Jabagat, Ilocos committee chair on youth and sports, declared the games open while the POF Flame was extinguished by flames before an estimated 3,000 athletes and officials.

"We want the athletes to compete in an atmosphere where the Olympic traditions are being observed," said Aventajado.

Football was played in the morning prior to the opening ceremony.

Dambanagan whipped Quezon City 2-0; Mountain province tripped Camarines Norte, 3-1, and Cebu thrashed Masbate, 5-1.

Athletics, aquatics and archery will start on Thursday along with tennis, judo and wrestling. The baseball gold was automatically awarded to Misamis Oriental by forfeit.

Chess, squash takraw and kasasalo will start today while gymnastics and taekwondo commence on Saturday.

Tourney to remember for a special fan

By Manong R. Castillo

CALL HIM THE 2007 WORLD POOL CHAMPS newest No. 1 fan.

Confined to a wheelchair, Macky Chan, a 27-year-old paraplegic, did not let his disabilities stop him from seeing the entire tournament live at the Araneta Coliseum.

Not even the worries of qualifying tournaments ravish before.

"I have the game because of the accidence," Chan told the bounce. "I love Marlon Manalo, [and] I would have wanted a Filipino to win."

So passionate is Macky's fan support for Filipino marksmen that he broke down in tears—right there at table side— when Robert Gomez, the Filipino idolized in pool circles as Superman, fell to Daryl Peach of England in the championship match Sunday night.

Macky was born with a slight case of cerebral palsy that greatly limited his physical capabilities, according to his father Manoling, who accompanied his son the entire time the latter watched the tournament.

Ernie Sajonia, the president of the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines, introduced Macky to the sport a couple of years ago, and the youngster has since idolized Manoling and Efren "Bata" Reyes.

"He is actually a sports-loving person," Ernie said. "He follows every event he can, especially the PBA where he is a Purefoods fan."

Macky became so popular in the tournament that all the players—local or foreign—knew him.

And most everyone who made their way out of the venues passed by where he was situated to say goodbye.

On Sunday night, after the pandemonium of the title match had died down, and just when it seemed that he would take home nothing more than the emotional letdown of the Gomez loss, the tournament's most fervent female fans—Michaela Tabb ...arose him off with a terse message. She stopped by to say good-bye.

"I wish you a lot of luck," the pugnacious Tabb, the top pool and snooker referee in the world, told Macky. "I would certainly want to be back next year to talk with you again."

And the eyes dulled by the Gomez defeat lit up, for it was clear that Macky would still have his consonance to remember.

THE WPC's most popular fan on cloud nine with the championship's most popular female face.

A SERIOUS Macky Bunsol (in shirt/Manoling [second from left, back]) and team Pops watches as Englishman Daryl Peach pip Roberto Gomez for the WPC crown.

Nervous Superman beats himself

THE PINOY SUPERMAN, AFTER ALL, did not have nerves of steel.

That, in a nutshell, sums up the tortured frustration stirred by the failure of our top screaming bet for the World Pool Championship crown at the Araneta Coliseum on Sunday.

The stinging verdict, honest and brutally fit, was sent by writer Rogelio Celestino, the fighting Bicol native from Naga, who saved the tournament scoring with the first break last week.

Roberto Gomez, 25, failed in his greatest battle and there's no need to wonder why the talented BP would post wondrous, his sorry future.

* * *

Imagine Manny Pacquiao facing Eric Morales with sweaty palms and shaky knees, or Efren Reyes in the second encounter of their famous trilogy.

Pacquiao, you bet, would've been stopped cold right in the first round, no ifs, no buts.

At least, in the case of Gomez, he was able to push the race-to-17 championship match to a race to the 15th chance.

But the more important thing is that, contrary to common belief, Gomez failed not because he was less equipped than Daryl Peach of England, the winner and new champ.

* * *

It's like this. Gomez, after enjoying

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

two days of fame with his 11-0 conquest of the favorite Nick Feijen Friday, followed by shifting ominous into Reverse gear of Chinese-Taipei and Karl Boyes of England Saturday, barged into the finals and was bailed to the newest big name in world pool hereabouts.

There had never been anything like him to the BP pool firmament.

Gomez displayed cool, seemed dear one the vibrant, chatty former newsman from Bambanglipo shooting up nuts with almost surgical precision.

He was simply super and there were suggestions Gomez could also change the face and accepted style of the 10-player pool supremo.

* * *

They were right. With his hard-earned surgical sharpness, Gomez outworked took away the agony while bringing back sweet excitement for fans with his guidance, often impeccable operation on the felt table.

Serious, by the way, wore a pink T-shirt in all his previous games in the tournament.

But he suddenly showed up in white Sunday.

Then, once in his seat, he was sure fumbling for something in his bag, maybe his amulet, before the leg.

He was already uneasy, but it was only he after his first miss, the crucial bad offensive easy 7-ball right of the rail, right to the first game when it started to show he was suffering from cold feet.

* * *

"I'm depressed," Gomez moaned from the head table in the post-fight presser.

He indeed was a crumpled, wasted version of the creative, daring, wizardly at the audience, wanting to risk and disappear.

Called by cavaliers like a subdued criminal, Gomez at least admitted why all his gifts, skills and all the greatness in his fabulous game suddenly deserted him in the biggest moments of his career.

He said he suffered from an attack of jitters, period.

In short, he had been choking in his shots all throughout, as ugly shameful face exhibit he used to hide by breathing hard and hitting his life lips.

Unfortunately for Gomez, his nervousness spilled openly onto the pool table, with the whole world watching.

There was his massively hopeful fans to cheer and pray for him.

But all Gomez could give back was the agony caused by his embarrassing display of shallowness during the well-attended championship.

* * *

Still, in this shameful setback, the speculator had had to be in the loser's shaking shoes to understand the bitter dilemma.

It couldn't happen to the best and the greatest.

"It's a first thing for me. I've never gone this far in a tournament. I feel bad because I wanted to win it for everybody," Gomez explained trying to hold back tears.

It's odd but detached Peach, the eventual winner from Blackpool in England, would himself pay tribute to Gomez's superior skills.

In fact, Gomez would also claim that he did not necessarily here to a better player.

He humbled, shook, rattled and fell, a Superman suddenly reduced to a Popeye minding his can of spinach, a victim of big, and-sanded fears.

There was nothing and nobody to the rescue him in the championship.

Gomez lost to his nervous, weaker self.

World squad takes 5-1 edge over RP bets

PAMMUCI: More draw

ORLANDO CITY—Rodney Morris and Karl Boyes handled their respective Filipino rivals yesterday to lift the World team to a 5-1 lead at the start of the Kalayaan Cup Filipino-World Pool Championship contested between Gabriel, 7-2, while the 33-year-old Morris, a native of Bristol, beat 2006 WPC veteran Ramil Alvarez, 8-4.

Marlon Manalo had a chance to salvage a win for the host country but Marcus Chamat rallied to forge a 3-3 draw, giving the fourth Win of the World team a 5-1 lead.

Still battling at press time were Nove Higgins against Candy Valle and Dennis Appleton opposite Jeffrey Roque.

The format calls for World players to tangle with their local counterparts in 10 rack matches with a win worth two points and a draw one point. Marlon Hernandez, Contributor

BUSINESS

Gina Reuff Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

More petroleum price hikes coming

Average increase expected at P3-P3.50 a liter

IN THIS ISSUE

Vista Land allots P4.5B for projects /B2

Strong peso brings little change /B4

DOF seeks to limit perks for Japan, US firms /B5

By Abigail L. Ho

MOTORISTS WILL HAVE ONE LESS REASON TO REjoice this coming holiday season as fuel prices are expected to go up by as much P3-P3.50 a liter in the coming weeks.

In a briefing yesterday, Consumer and Oil Price Watchdog's Raul Concepcion said oil firms would still raise pump prices by P4 a liter this month.

Following the P1 a liter increase in gasoline and kerosene prices and the 50-centavo-a-liter adjustments in diesel prices during the weekend, motorists could expect further pump price hikes of between P3 and P3.50 a liter.

To help mitigate the impact of these expected pump price increases, he said the government, through Petron Corp., could explore the possibility of selling Bataan projects' excesses at wholesale prices.

"Petron is the only one that can do that since it's the only local refiner. All the rest have foreign principals. Maybe Petron can sell to jeepney operators at wholesale prices, but they should pay for this in cash," he said.

Another way to cushion the impact of high oil prices may be to tap other fuel resources, particularly natural gas, he said.

"We should build a continuous natural gas pipeline, which could be used by a number of entities in the industry. But everyone who would use it should pay a certain fee. The

>>HOW PETROLEUM B4

Agency eyes improved RP ranking by 2010

By Dhaniv L. Lucas

(Conclusion)

THE COUNTRY'S CHRONICALLY poor performance in various international competitiveness surveys has alerted both the public and private sectors, although the urgency seems to be felt more by the latter than the former.

SPECIAL REPORT

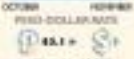
During a recent press conference by the National Competi-

>>AGENCY B4

CURRENCIES

OCTOBER NOVEMBER

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



STOCK MARKET

OCTOBER NOVEMBER

Stocks slump 2.3%

SHARE PRICES PLUNGED 2.3 PERCENT yesterday, dragged down by a selloff on Wall Street on worries over a widening credit crisis, dealers said.

Shares fell across the board, with improved earnings overshadowed by con-

>>STOCKS B4

Prince Charles steps down

THE NEWS THAT PRINCE CHARLES had stepped down caused the Queen of England, Elizabeth II, great distress. Her son is heir to the throne and although he has been waiting for decades, he has never asked his mother to resign and has always held interest in being king. Happily, it was a reporter's error. It was Charlie Prince who stepped down as chair and CEO of Citigroup after announcing a $6.5-billion loss on subprime mortgages and warned that it might be necessary to write-off another $11 billion.

The therapy has done me good. My leg is better but I still cannot walk very far without backache. It is the exercises I have to do that are killing me. I have to pull my left leg around the back of my neck to reach my right ear and I have to do it 10 times every morning. Babies and practitioners of yoga can do this easily but I cannot. On one occasion, I had to be taken to the emergency ward to be untied.

On Halloween, I went out to dinner with the boys to a French restaurant and got home later than usual. Pinching for the behind the door was my wife holding a broomstick. Quick as a flash, I asked, "Are you cleaning the house or flying off somewhere?"

* * *

Before the subprime mortgage losses surfaced, I have never had any difficulty predicting the rops and troughs of each cycle. I took some unusual SELL signal calls in May 2006 and 2007, which were followed immediately by huge falls, due to the risk factor reaching its maximum of 100 each time. However, in the last three months Wall Street's behavior has become chaotic and the risk factor is moving around in no unpredictable manner. One day the DOW drops 360 points, next day it recovers partially then falls another 260 points, as further subprime mortgage losses are announced. This will continue well into next year and bad news will be announced continuously by various banks throughout the world. Nobody knows the extent of the global losses as markets will overreact and fall further.

Scenarios faced are essentially basic: Bernie's with one female senator holding him responsible for the exit of her house declining from $5 million to $700,000. He kept his cool but I would have told her that the job of the FED is to control the money supply, adjust interest rates and lastly to prevent a recession, not to keep track of the senator's house.

He admitted that financial market stresses and volatility have persisted. Incoming information on the performance of mortgage-related assets have intensified investors' concerns about credit market developments and the implications of the downturn in the housing market for economic growth. He also expressed concern that the rise in energy prices (oil at $97 a barrel) could lead to both high or inflation and weaker levels of economic growth. In addition, further sharp increases in crude oil prices has put financial support measures in inflation, and imposed further recession on economic activity.

The future market is almost meaningless in expecting another interest rate cut in December, but I think their opinion is premature. Before making any decision, Bernanke will have another six weeks of data. He will know whether the number of jobs created in October was really 166,000 and he will also have the unrevised figures for November. Since the last cut, there has been a slew of negative news. As already indicated, Citigroup might write off $17 billion and Morgan Stanley announced it would take a $9.7-billion loss in the fourth quarter due to mortgage-related losses. AIG reported lower than expected profits, due to debt-related investments gone sour.

With a substantial part of the S&P 500 companies already announcing their third quarter results, it looks as if there will be a significant year-on-year. Those compare to double-digit growth every quarter for the past five years so there is no doubt that the economy is slowing. However the financial companies reported first, the final result might be a little better.

As the dollar sinks beneath the waves like the Titanic, investors have been running to other currencies like the euro, the pound, the Canadian, Australian and Singapore dollars, all at 10- to 50-year highs. Apart from a large federal deficit to finance the war with Iraq costing $385 million a day, there is a trade gap averaging nearly $60 billion a month, half of it with China. The weak dollar keeps down the price of oil and imports, while at the same time making exports more attractive. As the government is embroiled in the subprime mortgage mess, it is powerless to do anything about the weak dollar, regardless of how it persists. The S&P 500 index has risen 35 percent during the five-year period in which the dollar has been declining on the two are not connected.

Warren Buffet, Jim Rogers and other financial gurus have abandoned the dollar and have switched into the yuan, gold and a number of commodities, hard and soft. They have also moved their money into the emerging markets but appear to have forgotten the Philippines. Over the last three weeks, foreign selling has averaged P600 million, with P2.6 billion one day due to block sales of PLDT and TEL and PSE's Jaime Sy and Pedro Parlade selling (should weaken the peso but our currency is the strongest in Asia, having strengthened from 56 to 42.80. Presumably, this is due to inward remittances from OFWs.

Investors had better keep an eye on China, which is trying to slow its booming economy. The central bank increased bank deposits for the ninth time this year to take liquidity out of the system but the banks are still lending at record levels. They have also raised the interest rate six times and might continue, as inflation has surged to 6.2 percent, twice the bank's target. China is in its 30th year of double-digit growth and that is being fueled by vast funds flowing in, including foreign direct investment and the stock market, which has quadrupled this year. Unless this is brought under control, bubbles will occur in various sectors.

Years ago, China bought parts and assembled them into cars or (as has manufacturing) only 10-20 percent. Today, with factories doing every where, they import and manufacture 80-90 percent of their exports. This renders them less vulnerable to export dependency but at the same time makes it more attractive to other Asian countries. Nobody in Asia seriously is factories here because of bureaucracy, corruption and poor infrastructure. I do not foresee any significant change in the near future. A graphic reminder of the years is remitted back by China, America and the rest of the world.

Vista Land allots ₱4.5B for projects

By Elizabeth Sanchez Lacsa

VISTA LAND AND LIFESCAPES Inc., the country's biggest home-builder led by the family of Senate President Manuel Villar, is spending ₱4.5 billion for the initial phases of new projects that are expected to generate P11.7 billion in sales next year (2008).

In a briefing presenting Vista Land president Benjamin Therese Berenze said bulk of the budget would go to its high-end luxury homes brand Brittany and middle market housing brand Crown Asia.

The company's projects include a 299-unit condominium project dubbed 81 Mosaic in Legaspi Village, Makati City; a 3.1-hectare mixed-use development in Quezon City, two luxury homes developments in Bonifacio and Cebu; the expansion of its Camella housing project dubbed Camella Cerritos in Cavite under its affordable Camella Homes brand; a second building of its low-rise residential condominiums at Taguig City (now called Studio Residences 1); five high-rise condominiums in Makati under the Crown Asia brand in Salcedo Village, and Pentavilla II, an expansion of its former selling residential enclave in Cavite.

Under its low-cost business unit Communities Philippines, which offers residential properties south of Mega Manila, Vista Land is also launching this month two new housing communities in Bulacan, Bulacan (12.7 hectares) and in Laguna, Cabuyao's Sur (23 hectares). Mega Manila a Metro Manila and the neighboring provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Rizal, Batangas and Bulacan.

Real estate revenues from its affordable Camella subdivisions C&P Homes and communities Philippines, as well as one-time gains from a restructuring of C&P Homes' debt, have jacked up the company's net income in the first nine months by 366.7 percent to P2.7 billion from P1 billion a year ago.

Real estate sales revenues grew to P6.2 billion from P4.1 billion in the same period last year.

A gain of roughly P1.09 billion was booked from the restructuring of C&P Homes' floating rate bonds.

ONE OF THE BEST SELLING PAPER SHREDDERS IN THE PHILIPPINES
intimus

Despite low Aug. figure, 8-mo net FDI flow up 26%

Manufacturing, services sectors get bulk of foreign direct investments

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES REGISTERED $1.7 BILLION in net foreign direct investments (FDIs) in the first eight months, up by about 26.2 percent year on year.

For August alone, however, the net FDI dropped 80 percent from year ago and nearly 62 percent from July to $37 million, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas data showed.

Investors were jittery in August as most financial institutions admitted they were hit hard by a slowing US mortgage market, sending equity markets all across the globe.

During the first eight months last year, the net FDI amounted to $1.4 billion.

Unlike portfolio investments which are more volatile, FDIs represent investments in bricks-and-mortar businesses that are usually capital- and labor-intensive. "They are considered the least volatile form of financial flows.

The BSP reported that net equity infusion during the first eight months of this year more than doubled from a year ago, with the bulk of the investments going into manufacturing, services, construction, mining, real estate, financial intermediation and agricultural industries. The biggest investments came from the United States, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong and Germany.

In manufacturing, the BSP reported that producers of electronics, health and chemical products, food, and cosmetics sectors and decorative crafts obtained the biggest share of fresh investments.

International center, information technology development and multimedia service providers were the biggest recipients among the services sectors.

In the meantime, the other capital account, composed of intercompany lending between foreign direct investors and their subsidiaries or affiliates in the Philippines—recorded a $15-million net inflow from January to August 2007. That sum, however, is lower than the year-ago level by more than two-thirds due to repayments of loans made by subsidiaries to their parent companies.

The reinvested earnings account, while minimal, also posted a net inflow of $11 million for the eight-month period, lower than the $176 million plowed back in the local operations last year.

The BSP noted, however, that the data for 2007 covered only the reinvested earnings of local banks. Reinvested earnings of nonbank enterprises will be recorded when data from financial statements of companies become available, the central bank said.

"A key reason for the strong economic growth in Asia in the first half of 2007, despite the slowdown in exports, was the strong growth in investments," Japanese brokerage giant Nomura Securities said in a recent report.

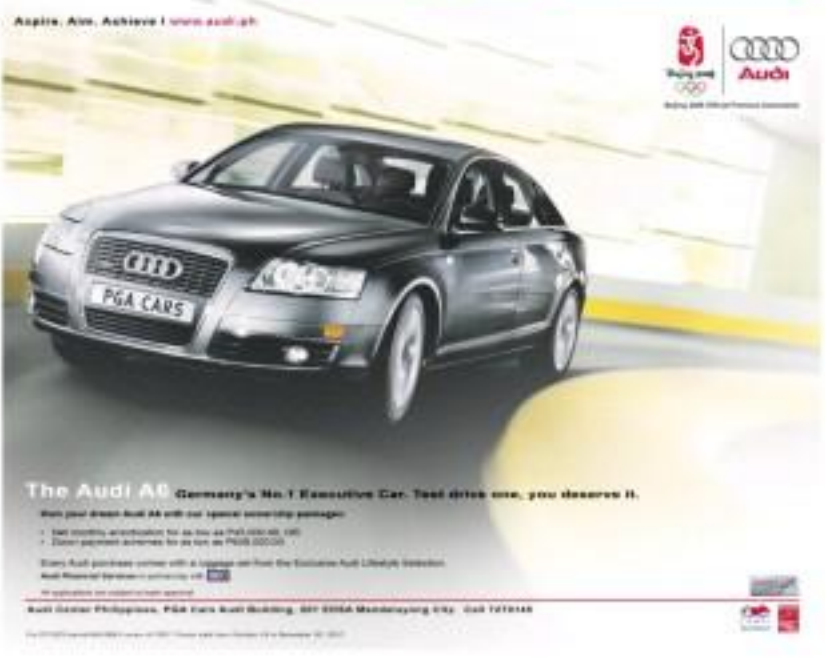
The Philippines' gross domestic product (GDP), which sums up all the goods and services produced in a given period, grew at its fastest pace in 20 years in the first semester. The second quarter GDP growth was recorded at 7.3 percent following a revised 7.1 percent expansion in the first quarter.

Entrepreneur awards winners known tonight

AN AGRICULTURAL equipment maker, a duck eatery, a producer of bamboo furniture, a dried fish producer, a vegetable grower, a furniture maker, a baker, a native delicacy maker and a bolo producer—they are the 8 winners to tonight's awards for the Citi Microentrepreneur of the Year Awards.

Now on its 5th year, the search for the most outstanding microentrepreneurs across the country culminates tonight in the awarding ceremonies to be held at the Metropolitan Museum, BSP Complex. The program, funded by Citi Foundation and implemented locally by Citi Philippines in partnership with the Bluewall Center (Council of the Philippines and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, honors Filipino microentrepreneurs who serve as shining examples of how ingenuity coupled with hard work can transform and uplift the quality of lives. The annual search has helped create awareness and interest to support the microfinancing, a long-term solution to the problem of poverty in the country.

The selection of winners rests in the hands of the Citi Microentrepreneur of the Awards' board of judges composed of BSP governor Amando M. Tetangco, Jr. (chair), Citi country officer Ranjiv Wilson (co-chair), former Monetary Board member Antonio Abalajon Jr., Bluewall economist Cielo Magno, Trade Undersecretary Ceferino Rodolfo, Ayala Corp. executive Fernando Zobel de Ayala, JG Summit Holdings president Lance Gokongwei, SPM president and President Advisor for Entrepreneurship Jose Concepcion III, Inquirer chair Maria Teresa Pilapil, Citi regional representative Sunny Shome, ABS president Francis Estrada, and University of the Philippines associate professor Manuel Figueroa.



Mass transit woes

POWERFUL PEOPLE IN THE GOVERNment, holding sway over multibillion-peso deals such as the LTO contract, are scheduled to huddle today another night-time tiaras.

It concerns a mass transport project known as MRT-7, started some seven years ago. It is to underpin agenda of the Erap Estrada Board, chaired by the lads at the Palace.

In business, you see, they think that this administration is simply fille-dullying with the approval of that $1.2 billion project in the northern part of Metro Manila.

Some months ago, Transportation and Communications Secretary Leandro Mendoza anchored the project to the Estrada Board.

That means that the project already passed the scrutiny of the DOTC, which is the country's highest transport authority.

It should soon be awarded to the proponents, the Universal Rock Corp., or Unirock, a private group behind the LRT-1 and MRT-3 projects.

Mendoza awarded the BOT contract to ULC, because no other group submitted a counter offer to a "Swiss challenge."

The project now only needs the Neda Board's approval for the next stage, the so-called process known as "financial closing," which may take a year, if you're lucky.

Then, as things go, construction of the

BREAKTIME

Conrado B. Bernal III

mass railway can only start by 2003. It's June, the MRT line can start running by 2012.

We needed it 20 years ago when traffic was already bad. Today, it has become unbearable!

* * *

THE only obstacle to the final approval by the Neda Board is the issue on additional performance bond of 10 percent of the total project cost. Or about $120 million!

The board imposed such a requirement on ULC only last September.

In other words, the last minute imposition came about only after the DOTC already awarded the BOT project to ULC after the Swiss challenge.

So, ULC argued that the new condition would jeopardize funding for the project. It offered alternative schemes instead, such as promising to the government part of the earnings from the real estate component of the venture.

The Neda Board has yet to decide on the ULC proposals. As things stand, the project is still suffering from paralysis. Uh oh, more traffic!

* * *

THE line stretches from SM North in Quezon City passing through Commonwealth and Quirino Avenues, all the way to San Jose del Monte in Bulacan.

Part of the project is a 22-kilometer highway, connecting the railway to the North Luzon Expressway in Bulacan.

Based on the BOT proposal, some $2 billion will also be invested in real estate projects at the terminal in San Jose del Monte.

ULC also claims that, this early, business promises outstanding. DPOE Star wants to set up call centers in Bulacan.

ULC also claims that, this early, business promises outstanding. DPOE Star wants to set up call centers in Bulacan.

By 2015, the line serves about 800,000 passengers a day.

That's a lot of people who do not have to take their cars to work in clog up all the clearinghouses in the metropolis night and day, rain or shine.

I mean, what are we waiting for?

* * *

All of the third quarter of the year, the mini-sized Security Bank bore all other banks in terms of ROE, or return on equity.

Its net income of P1.83 billion in January to September, up 36 percent from last year's, yielded a 20 percent ROE—the highest in the industry for the period.

Not only that, Security Bank ranked No. 1 earlier for BP bonds in a survey by the foreign magazine called The Asset.

The bank will receive the award next week during the magazine's second annual Asian bond members summit.

During the affair, Security Bank's Alan Montaña, will be recognized as one of the top local traders and salespersons of the Philippines.

For reasons just how did Security Bank do it? Well, Yasuni see no published financial statements, the biggest contributor to interest-was in loan portfolio, which were up to P62.3 billion and generated a hefty interest income of P 3.4 billion.

According to Alberto Villarosa, president and CEO, the bank really set out to build up its loan portfolio [okay quality loans] by embracing consumer lending in customers over the last few years.

And those same customers (mostly small- and medium-size companies) generated additional income for the bank, other than interests on loans. Fee based income of the bank reached P2.1 billion.

In effect, the "other income" reflects the drop in the foreign exchange gains, as a result of the appreciation of the peso against the dollar.

For stock market investors, the bank's performance means that earnings per share went up to P1.36, against P4.11 last year.

Villarosa actually explains the 16-percent increase in the bank's share price from P65.50 per share last year to P76.00 per share today.

I mean, really, 16 percent is 16 percent! Much better than the interest earnings on bank deposits, right?

* * *

THE supposed "death threat" received by Ricky and Nic Antonetta, who were said to have fled to Europe fearing for their lives, was a bit of an embellishment, according to the group that reportedly issued the threat.

The group is made up of young people who invested in a mobile phone service provider, selling ring tones and such to subscribers.

Nic is the daughter of the late Senator Raul Roco, while Ricky is the grandson of Senator President Manuel Quezon.

He also used to work for the group. Reports had it that she discovered anomalies in the firm, particularly in practice of buying ring tones on cell phone subscribers.

After she resigned, she filed cases with the National Telecommunications Commission against her former employers. Reports said that the couple then started receiving death threats.

But the group denied the claims. It even said that they actually were about to file a case against Pia for using the company credit card for trips abroad without authority.

I heard that Pia's mother, actress/comedienne Tessie Tomas, also sat down with the group to thresh out the issues.

By the way, the NTC also dismissed the complaints against the group. Hmmm...

Strong peso brings little change

Corn production expected to hit 6.74 MT in '07

LOCAL CORN PRODUCTION IS ESTIMATED to hit 6.74 million metric tons this year, as farmers offer more areas for the planting of corn, while using technology to increase their yields.

Last year, corn production had reached 6.08 million metric tons.

According to Rendie Illanes, president of Philippine Seed Industries, the country can see highly-possible given good weather conditions.

The farmers have already found 150,000 hectares of additional land, which they plan to use for corn, Illanes said in an interview.

As of the first half of the year, there are 791,044 hectares of land planted to corn.

"These estimates are also based on the fact that many farmers are going to continue — the land of hybrid corn," she said.

Illanes explained that the use of the pest-resistant BT corn for instance, would help farmers increase their yields in as much as 0.2 MT a hectare, while the most variety would yield only 4.5 MT a hectare.

Although seeds of Bt corn are more expensive, Illanes stressed that, by using these varieties, you cut back on your production costs by at least 15 percent, given the high costs of fertilizers, insecticides and labor.

A bag of ordinary kernels would cost as much as P1,800, while those of Bt corn may range from P4,000 to P6,000 a bag. But the yields more than make up for the cost, she added.

"We need this technology if we want to increase yields ... corn now is very expensive," she said.

Illanes said the landed prices of corn had shot up to as high P26 a kilo, due to a huge demand worldwide from the biofuels industry.

Amy R. Remo

Currency's recent gains have small bearing on the lives of 50M Filipinos, SWS reports

By Kara Pedrasa
Inquirer Research

FOR ABOUT TEN MILLION FILIPINO HOUSEholds—or about 57 percent of the population—the recent gains of the peso against the US dollar have not changed their well-being, according to a recent survey by the Social Weather Stations.

Also, about one in every three, or around 6 million families (20 percent), say they are better off before the peso gained strength and averaged in about 45 against the dollar this year, the SWS reported.

Only about 2 million families (11 percent) say they are better off now with the peso's strong performance, the Third Quarter Social Weather Survey found.

On the average, each family or household is composed of 5 members.

The survey was conducted from Sept. 2 to 5, when the peso's closing against the dollar averaged at 50.83.

The peso gained more than P40.83 centavos in May this year, its strongest finish in nearly seven years at the time. It has recently breached the crucial 49-to-51 "psychological barrier," when it surged to a new seven-year high on Friday, closing at P42.799.

"While majority of families say their well-being has not changed much, the net effect of the stronger peso is negative in all areas and classes," SWS said in a statement released yesterday.

The net effect is the difference between those who said they were better off now, and those who said they were better off before.

The survey found about 3 million families (17 percent) have at least one family member currently working abroad. Of this number, nearly one in every two families (49 percent) said their family's well-being has not changed with the strengthening of the peso, 37 percent said they were better off before, while 14 percent said they were better off now. The results yielded a net effect of -18.

"There are relatively more OFWs among class ABC families (41 percent), compared to class D (38 percent) and class E (9 percent) families," SWS noted.

The SWS conducted face-to-face interviews with 1,200 household heads, divided into random samples of 300 each in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. The survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Government support for fishermen sought

By Amy R. Remo

A NONGOVERNMENT ORGAnization has asked the government to compensate fishermen who will be affected by a ban on fishing activities during the conduct of oil and gas exploration in Cebu.

In a statement, Antonio Tinio, executive director of the Tambuyog Development Center, said the fishing ban will be imposed by the Japan Petroleum Exploration Company for two months. During that time, the ban will be conducting exploration covering seven square kilometers in the Tañon Strait.

The area covers the municipal waters of Bantayan and Daanbantayan in northern Cebu.

"Both the DFRFC and the Department of Energy have so far failed to give assurances to their constituents with stakeholders that they will compensate 1,500 affected fishers in the area," Tambuyog complained.

He said that the 1,500 fishers represent the total number of registered fishers in the municipalities of Mogpog, Boac and Santa Cruz.

Tambuyog explained that, based on a recent study conducted by Tambuyog, the two municipalities have an aggregate yearly fishing revenue of about P85 million.

"The approximate cost of a two-month fishing ban would amount to P15 million, or about P10,000 per fisher," he said.

He also pointed out that the amount does not yet take into account the cost that may occur from accidents, like oil spills, from the exploration.

"Although not likely, a major oil spill could affect the valuable coral reefs and fishing in the southern portion where various dolphin and whale species are found, and which is becoming a major eco-tourism site," he said.

Also, the government has no alternative livelihood plans for fishers, in case the gas field is found to be viable for commercial production, he added.

Exports of fish products to EU drastically drop by 50%

By Michelle V. Rarus

EXPORTS OF PHILIPPINE FISHERY products to the European Union has dropped by about 50 percent from 2004 because of the exporters' failure to comply with stricter food safety requirements imposed by EU member countries.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said there are now only 51 companies exporting fishery products to the EU—a drastic decline from the 99 listing there in 2004.

Consuelo Salmean, chief of the BFAR's certification department, told reporters that the decline in the number of exporters had partly to do with the EU members' imposition of more stringent importation requirements.

Effective Jan. 1, 2006, Salmean said, the EU has provided tighter "traceability" and other food safety requirements to ensure that products coming from the Philippines do not contain health hazards.

"Traceability" refers to the capacity of exporters to determine the detailed composition of the raw materials used in their products.

"Some of those that were removed from the list of accredited exporters are reapplying and are trying to meet the requirements," Salmean said yesterday.

In 2004, marine products exported to the EU amounted to $40.549 million. Officials said that the amount had dropped by a double-digit level by the end of 2006.

Agency eyes improved RP ranking by 2010

From page B1

Economic Council (WEC), its co-chairman Ernesto Ordoñez pointed out that the Philippines ranked 49th out of 61 economies in the World Competitiveness Yearbook of the Switzerland-based IMD business school.

It also ranked 126th out of 175 countries examined by the International Finance Corp.'s "Doing Business" survey and 77th out of 131 economies in the Global Competitiveness Report of the World Economic Forum.

Behind these weak numbers is the erosion that the country continues to face in its uphill struggle to improve the local economy and the lives of Filipinos.

"The challenge is not merely to improve rankings, but to create a better environment for business and our people," Ordoñez said.

Last year, President Macapagal-Arroyo created the WEC, which brought together representatives of the private and public sectors in an effort to revive the country's slide in world competitiveness rankings.

Its goals were to help create a competitive Philippines by 2010, instill a culture of excellence in the country and use so-called public-private partnerships (PPP) as the country's driving, optimist engine.

These goals are no less lofty values translated to tangible terms.

We want the country to rank in the top third of all major international surveys by 2010, from our present position of being in the bottom third," WEC executive director Virgilio Pal. points out in an interview.

Difficult task

The task is no walk in the park, however, and there have been many large-scale efforts over the last few decades—initiated by both the public and private sectors—to remedy the country's chronic problem.

According to the latest survey of the Makati Business Club (MBC) conducted for the World Economic Forum, the country rates poorly in the competitiveness of its institutions and infrastructure, with only macroeconomic stability as its saving grace.

"We're talking about our low inflation rate and low interest rates which, should hopefully be translated to the RSP (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas)," MBC senior research associate Michael Manalo said in an interview. "We're very strong in that department."

The same survey revealed that businessmen were also worried about policy instability, an inefficient government bureaucracy, government inability and coup attempts and tax rates and regulations, among others.

Given the urgent problems in many sectors that make up the so-called competitiveness picture, the task facing the WEC seems daunting.

The group's priorities, however, are centered on medium- and long-term solutions to harness the country's strengths as a service economy.

"We are focused on human resource development," Pulgencio said. "We want to improve basic education like English, science and math proficiency."

He noted that no less than the Department of Education is alarmed by the falling test scores of public school students in these fields, all of which are critical to retaining the country's traditional strength in the service industries.

2010 target

The WEC's program calls for a 20-percent score improvement in these fields by 2010, the implementation of teacher support programs to promote the profession and student nutrition programs.

"Education is an important field because our strength in services is founded on this," Pulgencio said.

Other aspects that the WEC wants to focus on to effective access to E-learning for small and medium enterprises, effective public and private sector management, improved transaction costs and fewer, a seamless infrastructure network, and energy cost competitiveness and sufficiency.

For sure, the WEC's game plan is not lacking in boldness, given the failure or similar efforts in the past.

"It is ambitious, but it is doable," Pulgencio said. "My bold prediction is that we're already on our way up."

More petroleum price ...

From page B1

pipeline should bring gas to the highway in Bolinao (Laguna), where Shell's refilling station is, and eventually to Metro Manila," he added.

According to data from the Department of Energy, as of Nov. 9, the regional benchmark Dubai crude averaged $26.47 a barrel from only $27.12 last month.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products counted to an average of $99.23 a barrel in the first nine days of the month from the October average of $88.71.

MOPS-based diesel likewise skyrocketed to an average of $109.81 a barrel in the first 1-9 period, up from an average of $85.47 in October.

Prices of premium unleaded gasoline now ranged between P41.65 and P44.66 a liter, of diesel between P34.40 and P37.45 a liter, and of kerosene between P39.15 and P40.91 a liter.

Stocks ...

From page B1

cerns about the conditions of the US economy, the biggest market for Philippine goods, they said.

The composite index fell 81.29 points to 1,638.27, off a low of 1,608.34, on volume of 6.2 billion shares worth P6.3 billion.

Declines outnumbered advances 123 to 68, while 24 stocks were flat.

It was the index's second big drop in less than a week after last Thursday's 86.16-point slump.

The Dow Jones Industrial average fell more than 220 points Friday after major US banks—Bank of America, JPMorgan Chase and Wachovia Corp.—announced they might book further losses in the fourth quarter from subprime mortgages.

"Cautious trading is expected to continue although investors are increasingly hopeful that the central bank will further cut interest rates on Thursday," said Lawrence de Leon, an analyst at Capital Equities.

The Fed is widely expected to cut its broad to cut key interest rates further, with economists expecting a quarter-percentage point cut at Thursday's policy meeting.

"This appears to be the most opportune time for the central bank to deliver its second ... and we think its last ... 25-basis point rate cut, taking the overnight borrowing rate to 5.50 percent," DBS Bank said in a note.

"Once again, an issue that one with the surprise cut at the previous meeting on Oct. 4, the need to temper the peso's appreciation—via a reduction in the dollar-peso yield spread—will probably be the main motivation," the Singapore-based bank said. AFP

DOF seeks to limit perks for Japan, US firms

Removal of income tax holidays recommended

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE IN PUSH ...ENG for the removal of income tax holidays from the package of incentives granted to American and Japanese firms operating in the country.

A finance official said the granting of income tax holidays to American and Japanese companies was not prudent because the taxes they were spared from paying here were being collected by their respective governments.

"There is no tax sparing in the United States and Japan. If they (American and Japanese firms) don't pay income taxes here, then they are made to pay those taxes abroad (their home countries). The (Philippine) government might as well remove their BIT (Board of Investments) scrutiny," the finance official said in an interview.

The DOF said there were other ways to attract investors without foregoing much needed tax revenues.

It said several studies have shown that the major considerations of foreign investors in doing business in a country were the stability of the regulatory environment and the level of infrastructure, not that fiscal incentives are the least of their concerns.

A study by the International Finance Corp., a unit of the World Bank that is focused on the development of private sector investments, recommended the removal of the ITH.

"The World Bank study among the 10 poorest in ...eastern investments most open to ideas. There is little evidence to suggest that the most generous they are, the more effective (they) became," IFC said in the study.

It said the fiscal incentives that the government should retain were the "net operating loss carryover," or NOLCO, and the "accelerated depreciation" schemes. These two forms of incentives were much more cost-effective for the government, it said.

With NOLCO, companies that post losses in a given year are allowed to deduct the amount of their losses from their tax liabilities in the following years. Under the "accelerated depreciation" scheme, companies are allowed to deduct from their taxable income the amount of depreciation on capital equipment earlier than the time of actual depreciation.

The study of the IFC is in line with the government's desire to trim foregone revenues from incentives that are deemed "redundant." Incentives are considered redundant if the recipients would have invested in the country even without them.

An earlier study showed that more than 60 percent of the incentives granted by the Board of Investments were redundant.

The government has been losing more than P200 billion in potential revenues yearly due to the granting of fiscal perks.

The DOF also wants to limit the number of companies that can avail themselves of incentives. It said incentives should be given only to firms that would boost to the poorest provinces in the country and to those that are export-oriented.

LGU funds to be tapped for educational system reform plans

By Bonnel W. Domingo

THE NATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS Council is urging local governments to tap the P17 billion a year for efforts to reform the country's educational system.

Emeterio de Guzman, the NCC chairman in charge of human resources, said the government must tap private sector partners when looking for ways to spend the proposed reinvestment of the basic education track and its extension by two years.

This is hoped to bring the domestic education system at par with those in the region — where a 12-year basic education is the norm.

Reforms are mainly focused on the improvement of proficiencies in English, Science and Math.

De Guzman said the government is enhanced by 1 year before its education regime needed additional financing.

He said he was looking at a 1.9 percent share in the GDP to annual revenue allotment, the reinstatement of half of the LGSF (local education fund and the issuance of bonds to provide investment capital for education.

Based on 2007 BIA figures, these could raise P16.4 billion.

"With a classroom costing P850,000 each, the amount could build 30,235 classrooms," he said.

Dr. Guzman also said the NCC working group was considering the expansion of the country's preschool program to improve the children's readiness for school and reduce drop-outs in the first three years of elementary education.

He said the group was also pushing for the strengthening of the technical-vocational and entrepreneurship components of the high school curriculum, particularly in industrial arts subjects.

Last October, NCC co-chair Oscar S. Barrioto, who represents the private sector in the council, said promotion of the so-called "dual track" system was one of the priorities in the body's six-pronged approach to help make the country become more globally competitive.

"We have always put HR as one No. 1 concern," Barrioto told reporters. "We hope to introduce partnership with schools and industries for this."

He said the system's biggest promotion of innovative GO that is geared towards vocational/employment were the Don Bosco school system, Mondac Foundation and the Dual Tech Foundation.

"In fact, these institutions and others like them are producing some 40,000 skilled workers yearly and we hope we could bring this up to 200,000 yearly," Barrioto said.

PNOC-EDC nets P5.4B

By Abigail L. Ho

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT Corp. posted P5.4 billion in net income in the first nine months, up 17 percent from P4.6 billion in the same period last year.

In a statement issued yesterday, the geothermal energy producer attributed the profit for to significant cost savings and the strengthening of the peso against the dollar.

The cost savings was due largely to the completion of PNOC EDC's build-operate-transfer contract for the 112.5-per Bulalo plant in June last year, the Mahanagdong and Malitbog facilities in July and the Leyte optimization plants in September.

The strong peso also helped reduce PNOC EDC's borrowings, in dollar-denominated terms, as this effectively reduced unrealized write-for in remaining build-operate-transfer contracts and foreign loans.

PNOC EDC booked P1.6 billion in foreign exchange gains in the first three quarters.

In January to September, PNOC EDC posted a recurring net income of P4.1 billion, up 15 percent year ago.

Net sales for the period dropped 2 percent, however, to P15.3 billion from P15.6 billion last year. This was due to the decrease in the average electricity price per kilowatt hour (kWh) and the reduction in steam sales volume.

Maritime manning, training meet set for Nov. 14-15

THE TWO-DAY 8TH Asia Pacific Manning and Training Conference starts Wednesday at the Hotel Philippine Plaza.

The event, which will end on Nov. 15, is expected to register 300 participants representing more than 42 of the biggest international maritime companies from 20 countries.

"An unprecedented number of international companies have registered this year," said Ashan O'Bonsawi, marketing director of event organizer Clearly Ltd. Events. Among the companies to be represented in the conference are Det Norske Veritas of Norway, Hapag Lloyd of Germany, Filatrol Spa of Italy, Pharid Tankers Management of Singapore, Stears oil Basins and Hanseatic Shipping of Cyprus. Companies from China, North Korea, India, Thailand and Nigeria will also be represented.

The event will bring the world's largest maritime companies to Manila to discuss issues and challenges affecting the crewing of commercial vessels worldwide.

LIFESTYLE
Editor Chela Batad-Formoso

The Anchor Institute Proven Nutrition Check-up Bus goes to where parents and their children are

Nutrition campaign gets rolling literally

Text by Nilo Mark M. Sabio
Contributor
Photos by Rodel Bonoc

WITH ALL THE SUPPOSEDly more nutritious food choices in grocery shelves and unlimited Internet access to information on nutrition, you would think parents have it easy nowadays in keeping their kids in tip-top shape.

Unfortunately the reality is vastly different.

A recent research in selected areas of the Greater Manila Area and Luzon by the Anchor Institute, a network of experts on fats, diet and nutrition, found that 35 percent of Filipino children were malnourished.

The study found that people now opted for convenience, choosing to eat out, grab junk food and serve canned, microwaveable or instant food instead of preparing nutritious, home-cooked meals.

Children, the study also found, were hooked to Chibi rolls, coffee and artificial fruit juices at an early age.

An unhealthy lifestyle and inadequate knowledge on proper nutrition among parents are resulting in an alarming rate of malnutrition among Filipino children.

Malnutrition stunts physical growth, reduces energy and increases the risk of illness and death.

It prevents children from developing to their full potential.

Anchor Institute launched recently the Anchor Institute Proven Nutrition Check-up Bus to promote proper nutrition and help make the country's children healthier.

Get on the bus

The mobile clinic is a dream come-true for many parents. First, it goes to where parents and their children are. Second, checkups and consultations are free. No need to buy anything. Third, the bus is equipped with state-of-the-art technology.

Inside the bus is the Body Analyzer, an equipment that precisely measures body height, weight, muscle mass, fat mass, protein, mineral and water.

A kid is asked to hop on the treadmill-looking machine for a couple of minutes. After the test is completed, results are printed out and given to the parents.

Qualified nutritionists/dietitians, who are also on the bus, will assess the child's nutritional status and provide parents personalized and specific nutrition programs, completely free of charge.

To make sure parents can concentrate on the consultation and fully understand the advice being given, Anchor has set up a play area inside the bus to keep the kids entertained.

Hannah Reid, Anchor senior brand manager, said children needed proper nutrition while parents needed the right knowledge to make sure their children grow healthy.

"By making experts more accessible to everyone, more mothers will learn about proper nutrition for their kids," he says.

"We believe that by doing this, we will be able to help children develop, grow and ultimately reach their full potential. This is in line with our mission of nourishing children and supporting families by providing them the very best in dairy nutrition."

The Anchor Institute also enlisted the help of celebrity mothers Iwa Moreno Alcaraz and Christine Bersola-Babao in spreading information on how to improve children's nutritional status.

During the bus launch at the Hon. Pio del Pilar Elementary School in Makati, Alcaraz and Babao shared health tips with other mothers and read stories to the kids. They also tried the Body Analyzer, learning more about their own bodies.

Mothers and children lined up for free consultations and checkups in the mobile clinic.

The Anchor Institute Proven Nutrition Check-up Bus will be going around Metro Manila and South Luzon in November, North Luzon in December, and Visayas-Mindanao in January-March.

E-mail the author at nino marksabio@anchor.com

INSIDE the bus is a play area where children can have fun while parents talk to nutritionists.

PARENTS get nutrition advice from experts.

CELEBRITIES Christine Bersola-Babao and Iwa Moreno-Alcaraz try the Body Analyzer during the bus launch at the Hon. Pio del Pilar Elementary School in Makati.

THE BEER BELLY REDUCER

Fast And Easy Inch-Loss For Men

For men who want to lose that bulging and unsightly belly quickly and easily, now there is a solution! Plastic surgeons have invented a machine that can "melt away" stubborn tummy fat in a patient's lunchbreak – **ULTRASHAPE**. This treatment gets rid of unwanted bulges and, unlike liposuction, does not require surgery. It's very effective in removing excess stomach fat, love handles or fat in other areas.

FAST, EFFECTIVE and SAFE, it's the most advanced non-invasive method of fat reduction to date. It works by focusing high frequency ultrasound waves from outside the body to targeted areas. These ultrasound waves break down fat cells without damaging blood vessels or other tissues. The fat cells are then eliminated through natural processes over a period of about 3 weeks. In the same way the body dissipates the discoloration from a bruise.

Ultrashape was founded 5 years ago in USA by Ami Glickman M.D., formerly a senior plastic surgeon and Yoram Eshet, PhD, MBA, a leading expert in high-power ultrasound technology. When they developed Ultrashape, it was well known that ultrasound waves were able to break down and destroy fat cells, releasing the fat contained within them. Glickmann and Eshet built on that to come up with the unique concept of Ultrashape.

Ultrashape is the first and only non-surgical fat-destroying treatment. It promises a reduction of up to 2 cm. in a single session. It is such a hassle-free procedure. You walk in, get the treatment and go straight to your next appointment. It's as easy as that. Absolutely no anesthesia, no pain and no recovery is needed. Patients can resume their normal activities right after a treatment. It does not have the risks of liposuction and can be used to effectively deal with problem areas of fat.

Ultrashape promises an average loss of about 2 cm. in a single treatment.

Normally about 4 or 5 sessions are recommended to fully achieve the result required. Both men and women who have tried it were impressed by the immediate results after just a single session. Proven effective, Ultrashape is definitely a breakthrough in fat reduction.

Ultrashape is now available at **Marie France FOR MEN.** Call 813-7989 for your free consultation. All consultations and treatments are strictly conducted in private.

POND'S reps' reminiscence: Gretchi King, Cha Villena, Michael Denney of the Pond's executives in New York, Mariya Lana, Bessi Casilis and Meryll Yan

HANDSOME host Derek Ramsay had everyone's attention.

HELENA Belmonte

AMINA Pulaloyan

MIRA Lagdameo

Flawlessly successful product launch

RICHIE Mid with the brilliant Christine Cuneaz, Austrian Ambassador Herbert Jager and Marina Corrado

GENERAL Shalimo Cuneaz and his wife, our very own Belinda Olivarez-C., with Ramon Ang and Gina de Venecia

CONSUL Pierre De Villiers

CATHAY Pacific's Vivian Lo with Grace Elera Go and Christine Cuneaz, Townlife magazine publisher

EUGENE Scobler

TRAVELIFE Board members Marivic Gonzalez and Maya Olivarez-Co with Liza Benito

EDWEL Jose Cruz

NATIONAL Artist Arturo Luz with the artist, Daniel dela Cruz; Sen. Loren Legarda, mega-architect Lor Calma and the artist's wife Monica

CHETA Montiel with Leroy dela Cruz

BOY and Monette Guevara with Pachet and Toto Mapa

JESSICA Guevara, Bella Gutierrez, and Camille Aglayan

SEN. Frank Drilon, with Daniel's wife Monica and the artist's proud father Dr. Ed dela Cruz

GLASS sculptor Ramon Orlina

SEATED: Miki Valerio, Mimi Valerio (chair), CWC president Rosie Rodrigo, Tony Tambunting (co-chair), Nena Lorenzo (standing) Baby de Jesus, Nenia Ibasitz, Shirley Go, Rose Hugo, Malicar Tolentino, Ericka Hutchison and Baby Romero

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Photos by Alex Van Hoppe
story Kaitlah Faye Dizon
writer

I WAS ONE OF THOSE really enjoyable afternoons filled with "beauty and excitement." Hotch, the fabulous brand for facial care all over the world, unveiled its latest, ground-breaking product for flawless and beautiful-looking skin.

The ballroom of the Peninsula Hotel Manila was filled with cans of gorgeous calla and roses for the launched of Pond's Flawless White Visibly Lightening Day Cream, pahingga.

We had the honor of sitting with the absolutely charming Michael Chaney, Pond's Institute's mega global director for skincare. He spoke of this breakthrough product and the key ingredient behind Pond's Flawless White Day Cream, the VSO-R3.

He said, "VSO-R3 is the Pond's Institute's patented complex of Vitamin E, Allantoin, Lipids and Niacinamide that works hard on dark blemishes and gets straight to work, reducing the visible appearance of dark spots. The result is flawless and healthy-looking skin."

The gorgeous Mariya Lana of Unilever marketing went on stage and told us, "With the Pond's Flawless White Day Cream, you can get visibly lighter skin and reduce blemishes and dark spots in just seven days."

Pond's also has loads of complementary products, pahingga, ranging from Re-Brightening Night Treatment to Light Infusing Under-Eye Cream and Perfect Finish 2-Way.

Most of this happening was eye charmer handsome hunk Derek Ramsay, no less. He had everyone's complete attention as he explained the romance one can find from being a Pond's girl.

We also had the opportunity to try for ourselves many of Pond's revolutionary products, dahlings.

New magazine

Hey, pahingga, it's no secret that I love to travel. Although I've been to almost every country in the world, there are still loads of destinations that I have yet to visit.

So, dahlings, if you are like me, I have one good advice for you: Get the latest issue of the newest hot magazine to travel, the must-have Travelife.

The brightest stars dusting the recent launch of the magazine were definitely the publishers Tokyo-based Christine Carnonian, and the editor to chief, my pahingga Lisa Ramle, who has been in the publishing business for over 18 years.

This fabulously mag is full of fantastic travel articles and eye-catching photos by the likes of Pete Daughter Loli Arroyo, award-winning writer Butch Dalisay and young musician Alessandra Tirsin.

The Travelife soft relief team launched the new magazine splendidly. Over 500 of Cosmo Mirabelle's namesakes and Alabang's attended the exclusive happening held at a ten private house in posh Forbes Park.

It's easier to mention who were not there, but my night eye spotted Loli Arroyo who left Indian Speaker Jose del Mundo and Ambassador Ong Chit Chung.

My buddy Johnny Litton hosted the program. There was a raffle of 10 awesome prizes, the main ones being a fantastic trip to Los Angeles courtesy of Fun Air and a trip to Shanghai courtesy of Cebu Pacific.

Unfortunately, it wasn't my night. After all, pa, who wants pan-loan some, e for ex-pen-sive ka di bala?

But everyone of Cosmo Mirabelle's honor namedrop-pables enjoyed the nonstop flow of booze and wines, the yummy seafood feast, and entertainment by the fantastic Cinco singalo singers, pahingga.

Sold-out exhibit

He was once a no-no successful solo-no product designer. Now, pahingga, he has become a super talented and creative sculptor.

He's talking about the it's nice Daniel S. dela Cruz, who just had a successful one-man show at Artist Space in Ayala Museum, Makati, dahlings.

The exhibit, "Ramblings: A Tribute to Women in Our Lives," featured 24 awesome metal sculptures in brass, copper and lead. As the title indicates, the collection was all about women, depicted in nuns and clowns and merged witch striking objects like rocking chairs, benches and water vessels.

"It was always intriguing what the client needed. Most I went to express myself by creating works that appeals to me," he explained when once asked why he turned his back on a successful career in product designer to take up sculpture seriously.

At early as 5 p.m., the Ayala Museum was packed with personalities that, like me, aime fashionably on time, dahlings. Doing the ribbon-snipping were Sen. Loren Legarda, National Artist Arturo Luz and business architect Lor Calma, along with the artist and his super nice wife Monica Guevara.

Me easily noticed the pride in his peepies to have, fabulous couple Boy and fashion plate Monette Guevara, and parents, Eduardo and Lenty dela Cruz.

The powerhouse cocktail included twin low-profile young talents Harley Ky, who dazzled out the art works; former beauty pro-prince Frank Drilon, Gigi Aida's mega businessman Toto Mapa and his wife Pachet M, plus tons of others like them.

Next to the artwork, my eye-catcher was Gary Valenciano's good looking son Gabriel who, in case you didn't know, pahingga, is the "very special friend" of Boy and Monette's pretty, pretty younger daughter Nikki.

Clothes for a cause

The Catholic Women's Club's fundraising activity for the year is "Clothes for a Cause." It will be held Nov. 14-15, 10 a.m.-8 p.m., at Glorietta, Ayala Center, in cooperation with Ayala Land Inc., through the generosity of Rez Zobel, CWC member, pahingga.

This event has been held every year since November 1996 at the Center Court of Glorietta.

CWC was able to construct from the proceeds of the event and to other fundraising activities three pavilions for previously disabled children of Bliss Gaches Village, dahlings.

ANA Solongsola of Lifestyle Asia, Joanne Ramirez of People Asia, Mia Borromeo of Town & Country, Pauline Suson-Juan of Preview, and Anton Sat Diego of Philippine Tatler

PARHUBIN's Agnes Bengson, Mecca's Mel Cuevas and Hega's Vicky Tanciam

POND'S Chri Rappos, Michelle Sta. Catalina and Jamal Ty

HENRY Quinsaat-NPC development director Lor Dantes

TRAVELIFE editor in chief Lisa Benito

UNILEVER's Christophe Jaymes

Breastfeeding tips for career moms

CANCER IS ONE OF THE MOST common reasons why some mothers stop breastfeeding.

But for seasoned sportscaster and television host Chiqui Roa-Puno, finding time for breastfeeding despite a killer schedule is just another challenge to overcome.

Puno, an ABS-CBN News staffer and host of two shows, is a wife and mother of three.

But she managed to breastfeed son Rancly 13, and Chiqui, 12, when they were babies. She is currently breastfeeding 8-month-old daughter Sabrina.

Puno says getting as much information that helped her prepare to breastfeed successfully. Being in touch with other women who breastfed also helped.

"I think the fact about the importance of proper nutrition for a breastfeeding mother."

Puno says a woman's milk supplies more importantly for breastfeeding women makes it easier for mothers to get all the essential nutrients they need.

Providing breastfeeding women much-needed nutritional boost, the milk formula can help ensure they produce enough nutrient-rich breast milk.

Puno also stresses the importance of a healthy and balanced diet.

She says it is all up to the mother to make her breastfeeding experience successful.

"Breastfeeding, especially for working moms, means having to pump your milk several times a day when you're in the office. To make sure you cope with the demands of your profession, you have to manage your time effectively and prepare," Puno says.

An active lifestyle and proper diet can help breastfeeding moms tremendously. That keep in mind that [breast milk] is one of the best things you can give your child," says Puno.

CHIQUI ROA-PUNO and daughter Sabrina

MEDICard, The Healthcare I Deserve!

What is Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease?

Take Charge Doc!

Your Doctor Knows Best

Jaime C. Montoya MD, MSc FPCP, FPCCP, FPSMO

Question:

My husband has been recently diagnosed with TB and I am afraid that I might have contracted the disease. What exactly is this disease?

Doctor Says...

Tuberculosis, commonly known as TB, is an infectious disease caused by a group of bacteria, mainly Mycobacterium tuberculosis. It is a common and deadly infectious disease that can affect many parts of the body, but usually affects the lungs (pulmonary tuberculosis).

Tuberculosis is usually curable. Effective curative treatment is available and consists of a combination of antibiotics that are taken together for at least 6 months, sometimes for as long as 12 months. People who do not complete the full course of treatment, or who take the TB drugs, or do not adhere to the prescribed duration of treatment, can become ill again and develop TB in others. Moreover, when people do not take all the medicines or stop them when they are supposed to take them, the TB bacteria survive, eventually multiply and become resistant against the drugs.

The person now is said to have a drug-resistant TB. The type of TB is difficult to treat—physicians prescribe different drugs (which are very expensive) and the treatment's length of treatment seems to go for years. Thus, it is important to carefully take the medicines and finish the entire course of treatment to prevent the emergence of drug-resistant TB bacteria. Your doctor may also advise you about Directly Observed Treatment Short course (DOTS), which requires active supervision of treatment and drug intake by a health professional.

Successful treatment of TB depends on close cooperation between you and your health care provider. You must see doctor for proper advice on your condition.

cares

Aging gracefully, according to beauty diva and columnist Maylene Casanova, involves choosing which products to use which include using only safe cosmetics.

AGING GRACEFULLY

Using safe cosmetics to stay looking young

By Joel V. Higos

"Safe cosmetics don't mean they are expensive. There are lots of inexpensive products nowadays that are safe to use."

Wearing beautiful and keeping one's youthful looks daily growth and are of interest. As such, people often resort to anything available to them to make what the cost just to keep looking young.

With the ever-increasing prices, that desire would no longer be desires to those who want to. There are beauty treatments, anti-aging creams, diets, cosmetic procedures, nutritional supplements and non-invasive, diet and exercise.

Our aging gracefully as Maylene Casanova, a beauty diva and a columnist for a national daily notes is, moreover, making the right decisions or choosing which, when, where and what products to use and what you needs, means yourself into.

"There's no new reason no one to look at me no one else wants to rely on her life," Casanova says, she's still young looking and also adopts a lovely aura and lovely.

And what's a beauty regimen like for the beauty diva who is also a mother of three? Despite her activities and in making hands on her grandchildren filled with little pleasures?

Casanova shares she's very thankful she's blessed with very good skin. "I always treat the first factor in keeping looking. I don't have to put on thick make-up to hide anything," she says adding that the lucky ones her regimen is very basic.

She says she's running on facials. "I believe in cleansing thoroughly all traces of makeup before sleeping," I use baby oil, cleanser or toner. Then I use a moisturizer. I also tried anti-aging creams which I found to be ok like. I'm so blessed because I don't have to buy expensive brands just to have sparkling skin and I can use any product."

She says that during daytime she only put on light powder and "always, always lipstick of any color. It brightens my face. I also use black pencil to the my eyes light."

During nighttime, she shares she's been using dual powder compacts lately. "They are powder with foundation. Then I emphasize my eyes with brown or purple eye shadow, definitely, and lipstick on my cheeks and again lipstick, usually three of me."

And with so many non-invasive cosmetic procedures now which are really not expensive, she says there's really no reason for one to look old. "I recommend laser treatments like IPL, Accent, Fraxel, Titan, Photofacial, and the likes. They stimulate the production of collagen in the face and remove aging scratch."

She says the most important is keep on exercise program and to watch one's diet.

"There are go hand in hand. We should be knowledgeable in the foods that are nutritious and healthy. You are what you eat. If you eat healthy, you'll feel healthy and won't look healthy. Try also to incorporate vitamins in your daily activities. I very my exercises to avoid boredom. I also believe in taking vitamin supplements."

But for Casanova, the most essential thing in aging gracefully is in choosing the product that you use and in making sure that you are using only safe cosmetics.

"It's important that cosmetics are analyzed and checked if they contain lead, parbens, parraffins, formaldehyde and other poisons. Do research on those products. Read the labels. Check them in goodwins and/or manufacturing and age-related dates. Remember, safe cosmetics don't mean they have to be expensive. There are lots of inexpensive products in the market nowadays which are safe to use. And what to doubt about its lifespan, like CD's, been with you for years. Throw it away. They usually turn bad after a while."

Footproof

Pinky Tolosino, president and CEO of Quantum Training Services Inc., shares that those are foolproof ways to determine if a cosmetic product, say a lipstick, contains a high level of contaminants like lead.

Tolosino was quoted recently at the TV show "Morning Show" hosted by Korina Sanchez aired over ABC 5 in the program, Sanchez showed how one can check if a lipstick contains too much lead.

"What one should do is put a small amount of lipstick at the back of her hand then rub the lipstick vigorously using a gold coin or earring or anything that has gold. If the lipstick turns black it has a high lead content," she explains.

She adds that for a lipstick to be safe it should contain only "pure, natural ingredients like Vit. E, Aloevit, Fraxel, Titan, Photofacial, and the likes. They stimulate the production of collagen in the face and remove aging scratch."

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"It's important that cosmetics are analyzed and checked if they contain lead, parbens, parraffins, formaldehyde, and other poisons. They can cause diseases even skin cancer."

Though there are manufacturers who are doing this already, she laments there are still a limitations.

Cited by Harvard

Tolosino is a career woman who has made consumer empowerment as her advocacy. Her skills, she's been cited by Harvard Business School as an outstanding alumni for her efforts in creating awareness for consumer rights in the Philippines. She took the "Owners President Management Course" at Harvard from 2006-2008. She's the first Asian alumni in "class history proper that recognized."

Quantum in school, wears, pharmaceutical are researching training firm managed by sir's, trained chemists, pharmacists and technologists. The company which boasts of the most modern testing facilities in the country is affiliated with the American Chemical Society and is also ISO 9001 certified. Quantum tests scientific products' safety. It also conducts seminars on Good Manufacturing Practices.

Tolosino says the people should be aware of what goes through their bodies or what they use because unsafe cosmetics may contain anti-feminants which may cause disease or abnormalities cancer.

Cameroon (left) with consumer rights advocate Pinky Tolosino, founder also of Quantum. Her efforts recently was cited her a citation from Harvard Business School as an outstanding alumni, the first Asian to have been given that recognition.

Manage your weight and save money

By Hilarie Faligao, Contributor

PEOPLE EXPERIENCE two extreme situations when it comes to numbers during the holiday season. They gain pounds and they lose money.

So we have to wait for the start of the year to fix our savings and resume exercising and healthy eating?

Of course not. Improve your self-control skills with regard to finances and eating especially this holiday season.

• "The more you become aware of your expenses, the more you can control your weight."

Studies show self-monitoring is effective in controlling weight, emotions and expenses. It will help you break the chain of unhealthy behaviors and thinking.

Some of the reasons people maintain to keep a journal is because they do not want to see the reality of how much food they consume and how much they spend on unnecessary things.

There is no such thing as lack of time. This is all about prioritizing.

When you document your expenses, food or exercise, you can perform a comprehensive analysis at the end of the year to help you improve your performance the next year.

My life years old eleven bound a relationship, after a year, in her financial management, weight loss and fitness improvements. She now saves more by bringing her own food to work and socializing instead of spending on fast food.

• "The simplest way to lose weight is to spend and eat wisely."

I just read the book "Rich and Thin," by Deborah McNaughton & Melinda Wenner, where the relationship of weight to expenses was explained.

It features a money calculator that helps you track calories and savings each day. It gave me the idea to research on the calorie count and the average cost of our high-calorie junk food.

Here are my discoveries and the things that might happen to you in just one year:

If you buy every day a 12-oz can of fatty soda worth P60, you will gain 18 pounds and spend over P20,000.

If you buy every day a slice of cake worth P40, you will gain 24 lb and spend about P13,440.

If you buy every day one small bag of potato chips worth P15, you will gain 14 pounds and spend over P5,000.

If you buy every day a regular soda or iced tea worth P20, you will gain 24 pounds and spend about P6,720.

• "Try doing it one step at a time and you will eventually see the results."

Drink water. Most people running in restaurants or fast-food joints order either iced tea, soda or sweetened juice. It becomes a habit and an automatic response in food services. Water is calorie-free and the cheapest drink you can ever have.

Bring your own food. Avoid buying high-calorie, high-fat foods like burgers and fries by preparing your own sandwich before you go to work.

Don't let your drive in an area where fast-food places are, if you have healthy crackers in your bag, you can avoid spending your money on unplanned fatty foods.

Cook your own meals. Invite your friends to meals at home. How much money do you think you can save if you make your own salad, cook your own rice and other dishes?

At home, you can be sure how much oil is used for cooking and your many calories will be saved (1 tablespoon of oil = 135 calories).

If you eat out, split meals. When I eat in restaurants, I usually observe what and how people order. Some couples will order more than one big set/type of dishes they cannot finish. The less food you eat, the less money you spend. The fewer calories you consume.

Do your house work. Set aside time at least once a week for your chores. You will definitely burn additional calories and save money by reducing the recurring hours of your household help.

Instead of watching television, burn 150-300 more calories just bout by cleaning your house, mowing or gardening.

Wake up early and walk. If you walk two kilometers every day for 20 minutes instead of taking a cab, you can save P39,600 and lose 10 lb in a year.

Use exercise to relieve stress. When people are stressed, they either eat or shop. Break the cycle by going to the gym, playing sports, doing household chores or just walking.

Remember that financial problems and major changes in eating habits are two of the major sources of stress.

Reduce stress activities. Go home and sleep early instead of going out late at night. Eliminating some of your extra entertainments will prevent you from spending on expensive foods, drinks, gas, parking and entertainment.

For comments or questions about fitness and weight management, e-mail the author at mishfaligao@gmail.com

Tiny device transforms lives of hearing impaired

CHILDHOOD: Implant is overall best, powerful hearing device.

Prosthetic

CHILDHOOD: Implant recipient Sian Rouge and Chuska Nantury with Medtronic manager Ian Asis Pacific Medical Hospital surgeon Dr. Marlenio Martinez, Dina Anderson, Medtronic director of clinical research and rehabilitation in Australia; Chantelle Chong, another cochlear implant recipient

ANNE, ENCHANTED WAS AN ACTRESS teenager full of hope and dreams when she lost her hearing due to inheritance of the nerdules, a condition called labyrinthitis.

Six years ago, she had a cochlear implant surgery and her life completely changed as she was able to hear and speak like an ordinary person. After earning a degree in computer science, she now works at the Information Department Since head office.

"At times, I even forget I am deaf," she said.

Sonata Aimee Mesones, 17, also relied on a hearing aid while studying in Cebu City but her parents Irene and Sonnie Mesones observed her slow learning development.

After a cochlear implant, Sonia is now enrolled in a regular school and has learned to speak to play the violin.

John Ash Castro had an implant when he was 4. He was among the first to undergo the procedure. Deaf since birth as a result of his mother's bout with German measles early in her pregnancy, Castro now goes to a regular school and can hear and speak.

Dr. Marlenio Martinez, head of the Department of Otorhinolaryngology at the University of Santo Tomas, said during a lecture seminar organized by Med-El, an Austrian hearing implant company, about one percent of the Philippines' population of 88 million had congenital hearing impairment or were born with a hearing defect.

The country is observing National Deaf Awareness Week until Nov. 16.

Med-el introduced cochlear implant in the Philippines in 1997.

Germany-based surgeon Wolfgang Arnold performed the surgery on Gerner in 1997 at St. Luke's Medical Center, with Martinez, then head of the hospital's Hearing and Balance Disorders Unit.

Martinez said the cochlear implant operation usually takes one to four hours. The composite often several operations: Combi 40+ implants system, Sonata FLEX system, Pulsar C1200 system and the Vienna bimodal system.

All implants have powerful motors made chips that can process large amounts of information at a very rapid rate using low energy. The implant itself needs no batteries.

The external speech processor provides the energy to power the implant, which is made of materials that have been extensively tested for biological compatibility, durability and safety.

The implant system case is only about 22.5 mm x 12.5mm and from 4.8 to 6.6 mm thick. Its electronic components are contained in a titanium.

Med-el, which is based in Innsbruck, Austria, has 38 regional offices supporting implant centers in over 70 countries and cities.

In the Philippines, its regional office is in Rockville Corporate Tower, Ayala, Muntinlupa City, and it has two implant centers—at the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital (UP-PGH-Med-el) and the University of Santo Tomas Center for Audiological Sciences (UST-CAS-Med-el).

Member can no longer be looked at merely from the way basic Newtonian and classical physics have always looked at it.

Classical physical science makes the following assumptions about the world:

1. There is an objective reality that lies outside of us, i.e. separate from us.

2. The reality is absolute, fixed and stable and can be observed, measured, weighed and analyzed.

3. It obeys at a certain force that can be pinpointed.

4. It exists either in the present, past or future.

5. Its activities or characteristics are governed by the deterministic laws of physics established by Newton.

6. The cause always precedes the effect, etc.

No one has ever questioned these assumptions that are regarded as true and absolute, until Albert Einstein came along and proved one that everything was relative, including the nature of physical reality.

Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity shattered the very foundations on which classical physics was built. It laid the groundwork for the development of the new or modern physics now referred to as quantum physics.

Quantum physics deals with the nature, behavior and characteristics of the smallest, subatomic particles of matter.

In this unseen world of particle physics, natural laws of flow, control, physics no longer apply. In fact, the behavior of the smaller particles of matter defies all previously known and accepted laws of physics.

That is why it took those same physicists a long time to realize and accept what they were seeing in their laboratories and in their mathematical formulations.

In essence, what governs the behavior of the smallest particle of matter is human consciousness. This led the great modern physicist Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington to declare that the "stuff of the universe is mind-stuff."

Note: Attend the next ESP & Intuition Development seminar Nov. 24-25, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. in Makati. For details, call tel. nos. 8307585 or 8926806. Or register at the Gen City. I will conduct a 10-wk tutorial, Self-healing and Goal Setting Seminar Nov. 17, and Soulmates, Karma and Reincarnation Seminar Nov. 18. For details, contact Aileen Tenorio at cell no. 09213-9235794.

INSIDE OUT
Cary Quirino

Wellness begins today

REPEAT AFTER ME: "Beginning today, I will pay more attention to my well-being."

Almost 100 percent of the time, if you will notice this reasons, subtle changes will begin to happen to you in body, mind, heart and spirit.

Who's making you sick?

It is easy to point an accusing finger at that luscious cheesecake or your scrumptious gym trainer or your workload in the office.

But, truth is, everything—and that means your time, effort or deliverables—are all under your own control.

Points to ponder

1. Each time you postpone a trip to the gym or put off your exercise, you are allowing your body to store down and not burn fat.

2. Every day you delay your workout, your metabolism slows down.

3. Every extra serving of gravy or cream or dessert you take adds inches to your waistline. As do not be surprised if you cannot zip up your favorite pair of jeans.

4. Shortcuts that begin with a compliant only attract more situations for you to complain about. This is a truth you must respect as gospel.

5. Skipping meals will only result havoc on your blood sugar. One of the secrets to good health is a steady blood sugar level.

6. Adding more and more processed food to your meal means more chemicals pumped into your bloodstream.

7. A heavy heart weighed down by hatred can only have events for more hatred—not peace of heart. What occupies your inner heavens in a regular fare. It is what your heart feeds on.

8. The guilt-what you can approach to eating is called the fast-food mentality. With no idea about what is good for your body, you simply eat what is available or within easy reach.

9. Talking nonsense to yourself is counter productive. Replacing to your mind traumatic experiences in your life will only depress you further and cannot you to be ill. In fact, talking about pain and grievances will create a huge ball of energy around you—you that to destruction.

Inspire yourself

1. If you think you are less than what you believe you can be, think again. People with a poor self-image name their own miseries. Sure, we everyone can think of a perfect childhood. But you are not a child anymore. So, get over it and start living.

2. Seek therapy if necessary.

3. If your self-confidence is low, enroll in a personality development course. Talk to your parish priest or pastor for guidance. Consult a priest or big brother/sister, or how friend for support.

4. Ask a nutritionist to design a health plan for you.

5. Go to a bookstore and spend the day reading self-help books.

6. Learn to laugh. When you fight or cry, your world becomes brighter.

7. Make it a habit to take multivitamins when your heavier needs. They will help keep you feeling better.

8. Learn to march to a mission of your own—a personal mission to uphold your health, restore your heart and revive your spirit. All you need is to say to yourself: "I can and I will."

Love and light!

INNER AWARENESS
Aileen Tenorio

Why quantum physicists talk like mystics

ONE OF THE MOST difficult problems confronting psychics, mystics, visionaries or clairvoyants, is how to make what they are real to ordinary people who do not and cannot see it the same way they do.

What many people are in the minority, their views are often ignored or disregarded by the majority which constitutes the mainstream opinion.

When psychics and mystics use as the real nature of the physical universe lies outside the purview of classical or orthodox science, and, because of this, it is considered to be unscientific nonsense.

To ordinary people, anyone who claims that there are such things as psychic or paranormal powers or phenomena must surely be hallucinating or imagining things.

This view prevails among the great majority of western scientists, despite so many incontrovertible proofs presented and reliable experiments conducted by reputable scientists showing that such things do exist.

This negative attitude may soon change. Psychics and mystics have found an unexpected ally within the ranks of a relatively new scientific field called by various names like quantum mechanics, modern physics, particle physics and, lately, quantum physics.

Indistinguishable

In fact, the very pioneers of quantum physics describe the ultimate nature of physical reality in often indistinguishable from the very mystics talk about it.

The uncanny and incredible parallelism in the thinking of both mystics and modern physicists was not lost on several keen observers of recent developments in science.

Four major and exciting books have come out in the last 35 years showing such parallelism. These are:

1. "The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An overview of Modern Physics" by well-known writer Gary Zukav.

2. "The Tao of Physics" by physicist Fritjof Capra.

3. "The Medium, the Mystic and the Physicist (Toward a General Theory of the Paranormal)" by parapsychologist Dr. Lawrence LeShan.

4. "Mysticism and the New Physics" by science writer and researcher Michael Talbot.

What has come out of the studies of quantum physicists is that it has rendered Newtonian physics and Euclidean geometry which have been the basis of modern science inconsistent, inapplicable when it comes to the sub-atomic particles of matter.

ENTERTAINMENT

Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

Lynn Brenda G. Velarde

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INSIDE
- Scenes from the snake man 'fantaserye' Sneak Peek /D6
- Diplomats visit 'Triba' location shoot /D6

Jed was Rachel's date at Beyonce concert

RACHEL ANN GO AND JED MADELA WERE spotted together at Beyonce's concert. Where was Mark—just some of Rachel JP Orbeta or Beaulieu? Maybe it was just a friendly date. But what's this I heard from somebody privy to Jed's affairs that he and Rachael were and off relationship?

No for us. I know 2006 po ako sinuyo kuya. But Jed was advised to stay away because the Christian Bautista's team up was being protected then," my source revealed. "During Rachel's birthday concert in August last year, when Jed was the surprise guest, he told her sorry, it would never and her all. But if nakaya si Rachel the pressure as she arrived with Christian. And Jed like a fool that night. He banged out with Mimi family. Instead."

I texted Christian but got no reply. As for Rachel, she would rather not comment on the issue for now.

Is it just a love team/box solution thing for Christian and Shin? And a run of OPM for Jed and Mimi? OPM invading Dr. Ang Binghamton, ng Ang Alaghabondy.

Break time

I've always fancied taking a peek into the "motherhood" moments of celebs. For instance, here's Zsa Zsa Padilla's rare pic with Dolphy and their daughter Cora taken during their recent vacation in Boracay. She labeled it "Four the fourth!".

"My sons were happy being laid back. We ordered room service all day. Dolphy watched TV while the kids and I surfed the net," Zsa said. "Cora wanted to get some sun because it would be winter when she goes back to Australia. But without it was a nice, chill bonding trip."

Bonding will never turn into bondage for a couple as happy as the King of Comedy and his queen.

Bewilicious?

Beyonce was said to have been fascinated with Bowell hairdags when she saw backstage during her concert at the Araneta. I texted Bowell for his reaction but he seemed to be "drunkus" about the issue.

Beyoncé manager/bel pamelel her like a bank as I doubt if Bowell was able to make a move.

Besides, isn't Beyonce crazy in love with Jay-Z? Or is Mr. Bootylicious now smitten with Bowellicious?

Hip alternative

Ever wondered if there is more to life than what you have been accustomed to? Well, think no more because celebrity insider Raymund Gutierrez, style guru Rhy Ong and corporate model Irma Limon will show viewers the hippest alternative in fashion, food, services, gadgets, events and luxuries as "Living It Up" every Saturday 6-7 p.m. on Q 11. Can't be vida genie!

Grand production

ABS-CBN2 manages an early Christmas present for kids of all ages via its newest series "Princess Sarah" (after "TV Band Rivals"). Top billed by child superstar Marlene San Pedro, it is based on the popular cartoon about a princess who had to endure the maltreatment of her power-hungry stepmother.

The grand production features a power-house cast led by Ai-Ai de las Alas, Dolfee Ocampo, Sheryl Cruz, Bobbie Parente and Albert Martinez. Cheryl was last seen in GMA 7 shows. Now she ventures into legendary territory.

Will her namesake relay give her the best of both networks? "It's a big time actress and I would say a pretty big break. I like the way the character of my role as Ate Minerva has been developed. There's a redeeming factor behind her mean ways."

Someone is said to be brewing between Cheryl and Bobbie but both of them are shrug it off. Princess Sarah airs once upon a time joined by Camille Prats. Now she's awaiting the birth of her little princess/prince in the fall.

The new Princess Sarah, for Maam Sheryl, will surely delicious all other child stars combined.

Birthday girl

Shaleen Lanes is the happiest birthday girl ever! Her BF Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian threw a party for her at Peralta and gave her a necklace with a "P" pendant on it. P for Papa Sherwin? Pill the engagement ring soon-soon?

E-mail: inquirerlifestyle@yahoo.com

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The less visible talents

IN SHOW BUSINESS, THE MOST visible personalities are the stars—actors, singers, program hosts and other on-camera personalities like newscasters and field or segment reporters. These "highly visibles" are framed over and pressed by the viewing and listening public, and sign the host's dinner and just of the time, but of the seven dust fortune as well.

But there may wouldn't shine as brightly if it weren't for the numerous (most industry) less visible talents and personnel, from producers and directors to the stage crews to prepress and make-up artists.

But is it these "less visible" who actually make the entertainment machine run. Without them stars wouldn't have productions to which to star, and would have no present them, either with performing for the benefit of their relatives, their pet puppy and their bathroom mirror.

Veil of illusion

Even those known and recognized are drawn by workers who treat kids themselves from public view to maintain the veil of illusion the entertainment world sometimes needs to put on. We call this third group of show biz workers "the invisibles."

Currently at the top of the list is the title character of the hit TV fantasy, Kuya. The popular commercials, if it were a big one...but he doesn't really exist.

He's a hollow shell manipulated by a little person inside. As other times, he's a puppet made in more naturally by hand or electronics.

But it's the person's handler we're interested in. He's the little person has a name, but we're not excuse agent to disclose them. It, because it would ruin the illusion that Kuya is a living and breathing celebrity/artist.

It seems unlikely that anybody would believe that Kuya is a person, since he looks so obviously like a character or puppet. But TV is so powerfully persuasive that some diehard viewers are "fooled."

So, even if they aren't, TV people are keen on maintaining the "official" illusion that the latest TV star is alive.

We're interested in Kuya's "invisible" handler because he's helped make the show's title character a big star, while being constrained to remain anonymous. So, even as the chimney he inhabits is besieged by thousands, he remains unseen and unknown.

Now must he feel about this? Is it just part of the job for him, or would he want to be known for himself? Is there a love jealousy relationship between the star character and the "invisible" handler? We have no way of finding out, because the handler's identity is confidential, but the seeds of psychological drama have been planted in our fevered and worry-artist's psyche!

Less extreme in this regard, are all the other manipulators and handlers of the scores of product "famous" that presently reside on the range of brands, especially those that manufacture goods for children.

Since the "fame" of the masters they manipulate isn't as great as Kuya's, these puppets' members most likely would be less potentially conflicted, but they're every bit as invisible.

Also unseen by viewers are the handlers of characters in some children's shows on TV like "Sesame Street" and "High 5."

Other "invisibles" include the venerable dubbers who make foreign movies or certain television-like accessible to local viewers. They may be comely unknown, but some of them are universally voiced than a number of the stars we have, isn't that ironic? But think, the unseen/unknown would a vile with such instinctive stories.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

At the Cinemas

GLORIETTA 1	1 LOVE FOR LAMB	2 THE GAME PLAN	3 BALLS OF FURY	4 ASAP, FOR MOM
GLORIETTA 4	1 WE OWN THE NIGHT	2 EL CANTANTE	3 LOVE FOR LAMB	
	4 LUST CAUTION	5 BUTTERFLY (IN A PIRSEL)	6 THE GAME PLAN	7 RENDITION
GREENBELT 1	1 LUST CAUTION		2 EL CANTANTE	
GREENBELT 2	1 LOVE FOR LAMB		2 THE GAME PLAN	
	3 LUST CAUTION	4 30 DAYS OF NIGHT	5 WE OWN THE NIGHT	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THE GAME PLAN		2 LOVE FOR LAMB	
	3 WE OWN THE NIGHT	4 LUST CAUTION	5 EL CANTANTE	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 WE OWN THE NIGHT	2 BALLS OF FURY	3 WEDDING DATE	4 HALLOWEEN
MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE GAME PLAN		2 LUST CAUTION	
	3 EL CANTANTE	4 LOVE FOR LAMB	5 WE OWN THE NIGHT	
TRINOMA	1 LUST CAUTION	2 EL CANTANTE	3 WE OWN THE NIGHT	4 LOVE FOR LAMB
	5 BALLS OF FURY	6 30 DAYS OF NIGHT	7 THE GAME PLAN	

At the Malls

Ayala Malls

Glorietta — Cinemas Concert Series feat. KUH LEDESMA, November 10, 6pm, Activity Center

Greenbelt — Bossa Nova Christmas, November 16 & 23, Greenbelt 3 Park

Alabang Town Center — Pre-Christmas 10 to 16 Sale!, November 10 to 18 and 23 to 28

Ayala Center Cebu — Monterey and Virginia Foods Event, November 11, 12pm to 7pm, Activity Center

Market! Market! — Jukebox Job Fair, November 16 to 18, Activity Center

Cristafer — Repertory Philippines presents Disney's CINDERELLA in Asia, August - December 2007

Ayala Museum — 2007 International Students Art Exhibition, 10th Bank Nations in Manila, November 8 to 18, 2007, Ground Floor

Tri Noma — Rhythm Academy: Kyla with Tyaka da Silva, Dominguez, November 17, 1pm, Trinoma Park

Rhythm Academy: Sam Concepcion with Ric Segreto/Ken Lacks, December 8, 6pm, Activity Center

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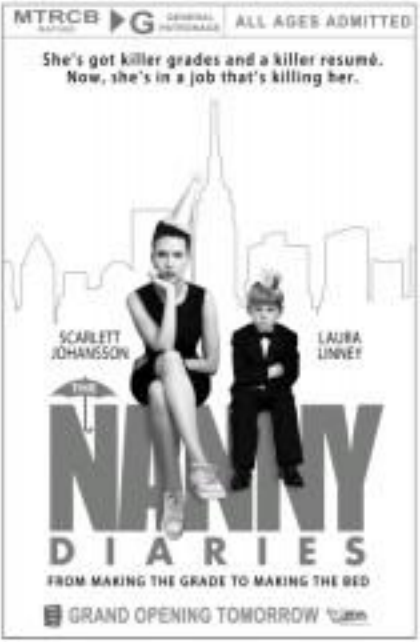

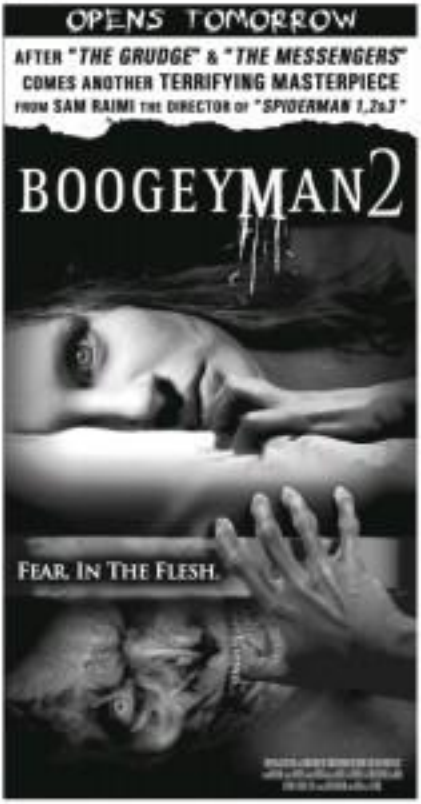

A diario ni/da by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA

A. LIPIN

BY EDUARDO

PUGAD BABOY

BY TITI JUNOR

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

KYOKO AND MISSY

BY LYNN GARCIA-LANO

GOVERNISTS

BY ELIZABETH CHONGUO

KIKO MACHINE

BY RYOKO ASEBEN

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY

Monday's Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

THE BORN TODAY: You're educated in the world's best schools. You have a strong social conscience, believing you're responsible, somehow, to make this a better world. You're also a bit of a dreamer. Things don't always work out the way you want, nevertheless, you have a wholesome, imaginative side. Your star chart will be fascinating because you're going to study or learn something important to you.

Birthdate of: Samuel Goldwyn, producer/executive; Don Rickles, actor; Robert Louis Stevenson, poet/novelist.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

By Dale Gross

		9			3			
				9		3	2	
3			8		7		1	
		3				1		6
	9			1			8	
5		2				9		
	3		4		8			5
	8	6		2				
			6			7		

Difficulty Level ★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

8	7	6	4	2	9	1	5	3
5	3	4	1	7	6	9	2	8
1	9	2	5	3	8	6	4	7
7	4	3	8	9	1	2	6	5
6	8	5	3	4	2	7	1	9
9	2	1	7	6	5	4	3	8
4	6	8	9	1	3	5	7	2
3	5	7	2	8	4	8	9	1
2	1	9	6	5	7	3	8	4

Pretty boy spews venom

SNEAK PEEK

MARK Anthony and Richard are both snake men but one serves ex-cell while the other tries to wrap him.

RICHARD shows snake in a frightened Maxene.

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by Rody Esparis

For a new 'fantaserye,' a matinee idol learns to slither and grapple like a snake from an 'ultimate' fighter

MATINEE IDOL RICHARD Gutierrez thanks his lucky stars that he isn't scared of snakes.

In a pivotal scene on the upcoming GMA 7 fantasy series "Komanchay," he had to remain composed while eight snakes were made to crawl all over his body.

"It was a different experience," he recalls. "I was nervous at first, but I had to remain calm. In any case, I was assured that the snakes were not venomous and were pretty harmless."

Richard had to look comfy (and charming) with the creepy crawlies, because he's playing Angel, a half-man half-snake on the fantaserye based on a komiks novel by Carlo J. Caparas.

Astral lover

It helps that he has always been fascinated with animals.

"I did a lot of preparation—physically and mentally—for the role," he recounts.

To help Gutierrez get in character, the Kapuso network flew in Filipino-American wizard-martial arts fighter Brandon Vera from the US.

"I try to train with Brandon every day, two hours, twice a day."

He says that Vera, an Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) heavyweight, is teaching him various styles like Muay Thai, but they are focusing on Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu since the combat sport "involves ground fighting."

Gutierrez explains: "Brandon wants me to learn to grapple like a snake, as well as the different techniques that would force an opponent to submit."

Who says that Gutierrez is a diligent student. "He's good. He's one of the top three among all the students I've had so far."

"I know a lot from boys, especially the importance of being disciplined when training," Gutierrez says.

The actor insists that his "Komanchay" persona is different from the other heroes he has played so far—specifically, the series "Mulawin," the films "Captain Barbell" and the jewel thief "Lapu."

"My dreamy, black Bayan, and I watched my past shows to make sure our attack is different," Gutierrez states. "Abygel is an original character. For one thing, he has venom in his body!"

At bonus, Gutierrez also has two new leading ladies, Maxene Magalona and Jewel Mische, and a new nemesis in Mark Anthony Fernandez.

"Working with new people makes my job interesting," says Gutierrez.

It is also Gutierrez's first time to work with Bayan on a major telecast.

Bayan points out that although he remains faithful to the original concept of Caparas, he has also updated the material by adding new details.

"We came up with a snake people mythology and kingdom," Bayan relates. "This is the most ambitious project I've worked on because it combines Noontime and Barbell, Mulawin and Encantadia."

Needless to say, the Kapuso network is "going for and supporting," says Bayan.

"We have a new studio in Marilao, Bulacan, and the costumes by Noel Flores achieve to the organic anaheskin look," relates Bayan. "We also made sure that Richard can move well in his snake suit."

Topel Lee, second unit director, is overwhelmed. "I've always wanted to do action projects. On this show, I realized how hard that genre is. He devotes a lot of time on each scene."

STYLIST works on "Starstruck" babe Jewel Mische's tresses.

LAST minute grooming for the Kapuso's reader mom.

YOUNG actor insists Angel is different from his past roles.

CHECK Mark shows brothers and co-stars Richard and Dick some cool shots.

Intrigued by 'Tribu,' diplomats visit Tondo

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Edwin Bacasmas

"WHAT CAN WE DO FOR TONDO?"

That was the question diplomats from the European Union asked journalists filmmaker Jim Libiran after watching his critically acclaimed film "Tribu."

In response, Libiran on Wednesday brought the foreign delegates—all 12 of them—to Tondo, Manila, where the digital film was shot.

"I told them to look at the place and decide for themselves. After the tour, they said they would love to discuss their next move," Libiran told Inquirer Entertainment on Saturday.

The digital film, which runs for an hour and a half, chronicles the activities of real-life gangsters. It bagged the Best Film in the full-length feature category of the third Cinemalaya Philippine Independent Film Festival.

Libiran said that while some of his guests were shocked with what they saw, the others were thrilled to see where the actors—all gang members in real life—live.

"The movie endeared the boys to them. One said that in Germany most of the gangsters are not respectful of their parents, but not these boys. They will do household chores and take care of their younger siblings," said Libiran.

The diplomats first gathered at the Vitas Base Liv Residences. There they proceeded to the new Smokey Mountain settlement, which is only a few hundred meters away from the old infamous garbage dump.

Shortly after, they gathered at the barangay hall of the old Smokey Mountain settlement, where a community leader discussed the living conditions of the residents. The delegates also watched a few programs organized by teachers and students in the community. And then the group went to visit the area where the fifty-two shot. The tour ended at 12:30 p.m.

One diplomat described the tour as a "very sobering experience." The other said he was "very whelmed."

The diplomats were composed of Gabriel Mouzens from the European Commission; Ani Kasper from the Embassy of Holland; Jir A. Stastny, Alina Bardzicki and Anna Fransson from Sweden; Christina Aaeron, Paula Schneider and Daniel Jesse The Switzerland; Tina Tichan, Ivo Doehring and Klaus Stark from Germany; Janet Pickles from Britain; George Jan Lemp Feydeau from France; Javier Laparza and Carlos Rojas Mateo. "This is the most ambitious project I've worked on because it combines Noontime and Barbell, Mulawin and Encantadia."

Needless to say, the Kapuso network is "going for and supporting," says Bayan.

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MEMBERS of the European diplomatic corps are oriented on the living conditions of Tondo residents.

LIFE goes on for Tondo residents who are used to seeing foreigners making the area.

GERMANY delegates Klaus Rauch and Tina Tichan document their trip to Tondo.

GANG members Billy Cruz (second from left) and Shoebert Hagar, who became overnight superstars, now serve as tour guides.